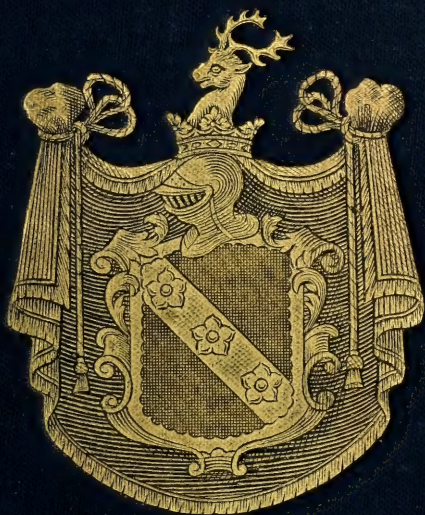




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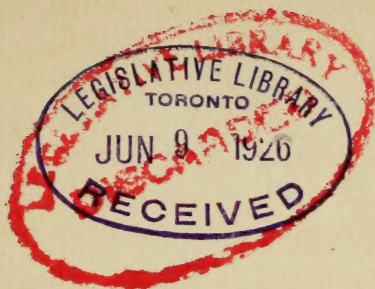
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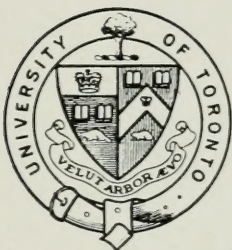
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THE BETTS OF WORTHAM  
IN SUFFOLK : : 1480-1905



THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
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JANUARY 18, 1894.





*Philip Chute*  
*Standard Bearer to Henry VIII*  
*at the Siege of Boulogne*

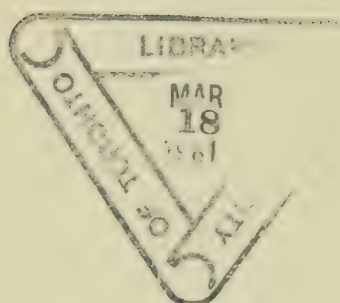


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THE BETTS OF WORTHAM  
IN SUFFOLK 1480-1905  
BY KATHARINE FRANCES  
DOUGHTY  
WITH XXV ILLUSTRATIONS

79846

LONDON JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD  
NEW YORK JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMXII



*Turnbull & Spears, Printers, Edinburgh*

TO MY FATHER

AT WHOSE SUGGESTION THIS BOOK WAS BEGUN

AND WITH WHOSE HELP IT

HAS BEEN FINISHED





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**I** WISH to express my gratitude to Mr J. H. Jeayes of the MSS. Department British Museum, and to Mr V. B. Redstone, Hon. Secretary of the Norfolk and Suffolk Archæological Society, for help in deciphering the most ancient of the Betts' charters. The late Rev. Canon J. J. Raven, D.D., author of "The Church Bells of Suffolk," etc., also gave me most kind and valuable assistance in this respect.

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And I take this opportunity of especially thanking Mr J. Sancroft Holmes for his generosity in giving me permission to use his MS. copies of the correspondence of Archbishop Sancroft, the originals of which were formerly at Wortham.

K. F. D.

THEBERTON HALL,  
*December 1911.*



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THE BETTS OF WORTHAM  
IN SUFFOLK : : 1480-1905



# THE BETTS OF WORTHAM IN SUFFOLK : : 1480-1905

## INTRODUCTORY

**I**N the remote parish of Wortham in Suffolk stands an ancient house, which up to December 1905 had been for over four hundred years the home of a family whose history, revealed in papers preserved by them, will be unfolded in these pages.

Like most old houses, Wortham Hall or Wortham Manor, for it has gone by both names, stands close to a road, the back of the house, once the front and by far the oldest part, literally abutting upon it. The road is known as Fen Street.

This most ancient portion of the present building was in all likelihood the actual tenement in "Fenn Strete Waye," to which, in the year 1480 or thereabouts, John Bettys brought his bride Elizabeth Wryght, daughter of an even then old Wortham family. Through this marriage the Wryght estates came to the Betts, who were destined to be known as the Betts of Wortham from that nineteenth year of the fourth Edward to the third year of our late King Edward the Seventh.

The opposite side, the front of the present house looks south over the park, where still stand oaks so aged that

they must have witnessed the founding of the family which they have now outlasted.

The house was evidently altered and added to as time went on; the front, pleasing and eminently homelike, with its gabled wings and old chimney stacks, dates only from Tudor times.

But, before the house was dismantled after the death of the last of the family, it was the interior which excited most particular interest:—the sunny home-like rooms, crowded with beautiful antique furniture worn by faithful service to many generations; low ceilings crossed by massive oak beams; panelled walls hung close with family portraits; ancient prints interspersed and thrown into relief by blue and white delft plates; suits of armour of the Stuart period in hall and passages; and in the drawing-room, upon magnificently carved and inlaid cabinets, and adorning the walls from floor to ceiling, china of many hues and varieties, which later, when it had to be sold, fetched fabulous prices at Christie's. The whole interior of the old house had an air of fitness, giving the impression of immemorial usage, as if each chair and cabinet, each picture and piece of china, had had its own particular place assigned to it by the wish and custom of many generations of the home-loving Betts.

The library, however, the abiding-place of over four thousand volumes, for the greater part venerable tomes, held the most interesting of all the treasures of Wortham; for here a door in the panelling opened into a tiny room, once, maybe, a secret chamber, where were hoarded muniments, MSS. and parchments of dates ranging from 1272, the year of the accession of Edward First, to mid-Victorian days.



It is from these documents that this little history has been compiled, and it has been fascinating work to gather from them, here a bit and there a bit, the life story of eleven generations. Chronicles of those great in fame and noble of birth are many, and may be seen any day in public museums and Record Offices ; but MSS. illustrating the history of a family like this of middle rank are far more rare.

“ If,” says quaint old Fuller, in words which aptly describe the Betts of Wortham, “ a strict enquiry should be made after the ancient gentry of England, most of them would be found amongst such middle-sized persons as are above £200 and beneath £1000 of annual revenue. It was the motto of wise Sir Nicholas Bacon, *mediocra firma*, moderate things are most lasting. Men of great estates in national broils have smarted deeply for their visible engagements, to the ruin of their families, whereof we have had too many sad experiences, while such persons who are moderately mounted above the level of common people into a competency above want and beneath envy, have, by God’s blessing on their frugality, continued longest in their conditions.”

In piecing together the Wortham documents it has been the author’s endeavour to let them, as far as is possible, tell their own story. They do in fact, as nothing else could have done, present a continuous picture of the life and customs of successive ages. “ The old order changeth,” indeed, “ giving place to new,” but so gently, so gradually, as hardly to be perceived by any one individual of the passing generations of men.

## CHAPTER I

1462-1487

ANCIENT WILLS—A DEED OF A.D. 1272—JOHN BETTYS'  
HOME AT WORTHAM

**T**HE records of the Betts may fairly be said to begin with Beatys Wryght, grandmother of the Elizabeth who married John Bettys.

At the end of the long Wars of the Roses, in 1462, Widow Beatys Wryght made her will. By it we find that she was a woman of independent means, who had the disposal of a tenement called "Lords" in Wortham, which she gave to Rycharde, one of her two sons. To John, her other son, the future father-in-law of John Bettys, she left nothing save six pieces of pewter—though this was a considerable bequest in days when to serve "dainty meats on wooden platters" was the rule even in great households—for John was then already in possession of his late father's copyholds. This is proved by an ancient copy of Court Roll preserved by the Betts family, wherein mention is made of a piece of land called "Spers" in Wortham, as being held at that time by John. "Spers" has since come down in a direct line, in the family of John Wryght's descendants the Betts, to the year 1905.

That John Wryght was also seized of freehold land is probable, but copyhold is the only description of landed property that can be traced with any certainty before the statute of Henry VIII. sanctioned the devise of real property by will.

The oldest document found at Wortham deals with a piece of common land, which will be frequently referred to throughout the Betts history, and is still possessed by the parish. It is a "Dede of gyft," whereby Sir Gerard de Wachesham granted a common of 160 acres then and now called the Ling to the "town shipp of Wortham" by the service of "a gilopper cloue" to be paid yearly "on the Feast of Saint Michael the archangel." The two copies of this "dede," preserved by the Betts, were written, one in Latin and the other in quaint old English. On the back of the Latin copy dated 1272, is an unsigned memorandum:

"This is 395 yeares old Anno Dom 1667."

A marginal note states that the original "dede" under "seall of Armys" was delivered to the abbots of Bury. Some of the witnesses' signatures show surnames in the making: "Robert at the stile, Rynold of Wython, Peter of Burgate." Of these, the first, Stile, later Stilles and Stiles, continued at Wortham until the end of the eighteenth century.

The thirteenth century "townsmen" of Wortham severally held scattered acres in the infield under two lords: the generous Sir Gerard de Wachesham and the Abbot of St Edmundsbury; and two priests, of the two lords' separate presentation, looked after the spiritual welfare of the parish. There was also a semi-

religious gild in Wortham, "the fraternity of Saint Trinity," of which, in 1462, Beatys Wryght was a member. By her will she left to this gild a coomb of malt, which she may have intended to be brewed into ale for drinking at her "month's mind," instead of meaning merely to add to the endowment of the gild.

Such parish gilds, holding property in which each member had an interest, were of the greatest value to the people of mediæval England, for the common funds helped the brethren in old age or sickness and provided for their burial; as do the great and beneficent Friendly Societies of to-day.

But life was by no means all work in the middle ages, and gilds had a social as well as a practical side. "You know," says a writer on husbandry about 1472, "there are fifty-two weeks in the year. Now take away eight weeks for holydays and other hindrances, then are there forty-four working weeks left." Among the "hindrances" to work of which this old writer complained were, besides the great ecclesiastical festivals, parochial festivities, of which the principal was the annual Church ale, held either in the gild house or in the church itself. The pence contributed by members of a village gild seem absurdly inadequate, until it is remembered that a penny then had about fifteen times the purchasing power of a penny now. The contemporary accounts of Bishop Fleetwood tell us that four pence halfpenny would then buy a dozen pigeons, three pence a goose or a pig, and one penny a gallon of ale. Master tradesmen then wrought for three pence a day and labourers for one penny. But the fact is that, after

providing for the festivities, there was usually a surplus, which passed into the hands of the churchwardens. That this was so, the records for 1485, and after, of the neighbouring parish of Yaxley may be accepted as sufficient evidence.

Unfortunately, all the churchwardens' accounts of Wortham prior to the eighteenth century have been lost. We do not know the amount of the "town-stock," but tradition has it that but for the uncharitable behaviour of the people of Wortham, the parish would have gained an annual income of thirty pounds. A man called Purdy asked leave to be buried among them, which they refused because he was a leper, whereupon he left his poor body and rich estate to the neighbouring parish of South Lopham, which in due time gave him Christian burial.

The last bequest in Beatys Wryght's will is of one coomb of wheat to John Bokynham.

The price of wheat was at that time four shillings and four pence a quarter. Bishop Fleetwood bids us take notice "that from 1440 to 1460 wheat had never been above eight shillings the quarter, notwithstanding the sword was drawn between York and Lancaster, which usually cuts down corn as well as men."

Suffolk happily was untouched by the Wars of the Roses, but more than mere echoes of the struggle were likely to have reached the ears of Beatys Wryght. Six miles from her home in the town of Eye dwelt one Margaret Jourdemayne, a noted witch; and to this woman, before the first battle of St Albans, is said to have come the gallant Duke of Somerset to learn his fate.

Shakespeare makes the familiar spirit say :



“ Let him shun castles ;  
 Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains  
 Than where castles mounted stand.”

Words falsely true, for after the battle the Duke's corpse was found

“ underneath an ale house paltry sign;  
 The Castle of St Alban's.”

Later, the witch conspired with the Duchess of Gloucester, making for her a wax image of King Henry VI., the gradual melting of which should drain his life away. The plot was discovered, the witch was burned, and the Duchess was imprisoned in Peel Castle for the rest of her life.

These were the days of darkest superstition, when witchcraft was as real to the credulous people as the Devil they saw painted in the Doom on the church wall ; and far more to be dreaded than he, seeing that witches had power over this present life, and the Devil only over that which was to come.

Neither John nor Rycharde, Beatys Wryght's two sons, left any record behind them, but Alys John's widow, signed her will in the third year of Henry VII., 1487.

And this brings us to the Bettys, Bettes, or Betts of Wortham ; the spelling varied, after the casual habit of the day.

Alys Wryght bequeathed to her five grandchildren, “ John, Thomas, Water, Rycharde and Alys, ye chyl-dren of my dowghter Elizabeth wyfe of John Bettys, vjs. viijd. or elijs eche of them a kowe.”

“ To Jon Harvey my (? nephew) xiijs. iiijd. and xs. ye said John owthe me I haue relese him to praye for my soule. To Amy Bouet my dowghter vjs. viijd. and vjs.

viiid. that she owth me I relese her to praye for my sowle. To the high altar of the Churche of our Lady in Wurtham vjs. viiid. and to the gylde of St Trinite vjs. viiid." (In those days a noble, value 6s. 8d., was enough to buy a cow or a load of hay.) "I will have a certyn (? certifying) in the said churche ijs. iiid." Whether masses were to be sung by the rectors of Wortham or by "the Austen freres of Thetford," to whom xs. was bequeathed, is not stated.

Her religious dues discharged, Alys Wryght's thoughts naturally turned woman-like to the disposal of her clothes, then among the most treasured of all personal property.

The import of manufactured cloth had, with a view to encourage native enterprise, been forbidden by a statute of 1464. Up to then the English had been sarcastically nicknamed "de schepers van Vlaanderen," being content as they were to receive back their own wool, in the shape of cloth, from Flemish looms. The price of clothes in 1487 must have been enormous, judging by the cost before imports were stopped of russet cloth the cheapest stuff in the market. This was as much as one shilling and a penny a yard (roughly sixteen shillings and three pence of our money), and at least twelve yards were needed for a woman's gown of that period.

Alys Wryght had a servant Kateryn Gosshauke, and to her she bequeathed articles not to be despised by one whose annual wage did not exceed a pound of the then money.

These were "j payre of shets ; j canuas : j hedkerche nexte ye beste : iij yerds blankets for a petycote and a smokke cloth : j pewter dysshe : j candylstyke, my russet cote and a payer of Beedes of Jeet."

A pair of beads was the customary name for a rosary. Readers of Chaucer will remember his description of the Prioress :—

“ Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche baar  
A peire of bedes gaudid al with grene.”

And jet beads such as those left to Kateryn were supposed to have especial virtues : Bishop Bale in *Kynge Johan*, written some years later, alludes to this belief :—

“ Blessynges with black bedes will help in every peril.”

Only one other article of dress is mentioned by name, “ my vyolet kyrtyll.” The testatrix, aware, perhaps, that this garment was out of date, leaves it to Margery Wryght, with the humble proviso “ yf she will haue it.”

Fashionable dress of that time was in cut and style not unlike that worn by the Court personages in a pack of cards. Gorgeous embroideries and silks, spoils of the French war, decked English men and women. In vain had Lydgate, the monkish poet of St Edmundsbury, ridiculed “ Woman his hornys,” for the ladies continued to wear forked head-dresses. Men’s dress, however, was more successfully attacked, and the long pikes or beaks of shoes, which they wore tied back to the knee with silver chains, were condemned by law to be cut down to two inches.

To repress extravagance was the aim of Edward IV., and to this end he framed sumptuary laws ; he also fixed the price of bread by assize, and decreed that no man, were he duke or peasant, should be allowed more than two courses at dinner. This last law remained unrepealed until the reign of Victoria !

A genial king was this Edward, albeit he interfered with the fashions ; and although he taxed his people and oppressed them sorely with so-called Benevolences, he did it in a pleasant way.

An old historian relates how in the course of gathering a Benevolence " the King had called before him a Widow Gentlewoman, much abounding in Wealth and equally stricken in years ; of whom he only demanded what she would freely give him, towards the support of his great Charges. By my troth, quoth the old Lady, for the Sake of thy lovely Countenance, thou shalt have twenty pounds. The King, expecting scarce half that sum, thanked her and gave her a loving kiss. Whether the Flavour of his Breath did so warm her old Heart, or she esteemed the kiss of a king so precious a Jewel, she swore directly that he should have twenty pounds more which she as willingly paid as offered."

Alys Wryght may well have seen King Edward IV., for while on his progresses to Bury, Norwich and Walsingham he must have passed close by the parish of Wortham.

And she had also good reason to remember his deposed predecessor King Henry VI., who convened a Parliament at St Edmundsbury in 1447. She could indeed hardly have forgotten how the roads round Bury had to be patrolled by armed men day and night, for fear of a rising to rescue the King's uncle, " the good Duke Humfrey " of Gloucester, who was accused of treason—falsely, people thought—at this Parliament. She may even have seen some of the men-at-arms on the roads near her house, and have heard that " many died of cold and watching."

Wortham lies on the highway between Bury St



Edmunds and the village of Hoxne—scene of St Edmund's martyrdom, a place almost equal in sanctity to the saint's great shrine. It was to encourage pilgrims to visit this holy place that Gilbert, titular bishop of Orkney, a suffragan of the see of Norwich, had in 1307 granted an indulgence of forty days to those who should go on pilgrimage to the image of St Edmund at Hoxne, and some such pilgrim perhaps may have brought the news of the good Duke's murder at Bury to the people of Wortham. Palmers and wandering friars were the great newsmongers of those days, paying for their night's lodging and entertainment with many a gossiping tale.

Mistress Wryght did not die till ten years after the date of her will, which had been "Yovyn" (given) at Wortham in 1487. Let us picture her, in her serene old age, sitting by the hearth in the centre of the great hall of John Bettys' house in "Fenn Street Waye" with her grandchildren at her knee. Clad in her "violet kyrtyll" and "russet cote," the "hedkerche nexte ye beste" covering her silver hair, she must have made a pretty picture, with baby Alys, a miniature copy of herself, in her arms, and the four boys in their quaint long coats, reaching to the top of high boots with long pointed toes, their hair in curls on their shoulders, in strange contrast to their little sister's primly white coifed head. While the children listened, she would tell tales of her youth and middle age, of the long Wars of the Roses, of the hateful witch of Eye, and of the death of Richard the late king on the bloody field of Bosworth.

Perhaps she would veil the horror of the murder of the young Princes in the tower, under the guise of a then new popular ballad, "The Doleful History of the





WORTHAM MANOR

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Babes in the Wood," to which the children would listen with round eyes and bated breath. A son of Rycharde Bettys, one of these children, was later to make his home at Watton, near Wayland (Wailing) Wood, which is still confidently believed by the country folk to have been the scene of the murder of "the Babes" of the ballad.

All England was yet ringing with the ballad ; it had really been aimed at the late King, for the common talk ran, that it was by his orders that Sir James Tyrell had smothered the young Princes. The tragedy would have been of special interest at Wortham, for this Sir James was related to Sir Thomas Tyrell, one of the lords of Wortham Manor and patron of one benefice, who had but lately presented John Gentyleman, their then parish priest, to the Rectory of Wortham Eastgate.

In the days of Alys Wryght education was mostly in the hands of the religious orders. It is known that the monks of St Edmund's Chapel at Hoxne kept a school, and so probably did the monks from the great Abbey of St Edmondsbury who served the Chapel of St John in Palgrave. We do not know which school the Bettys children attended, but that they had due instruction in "grammar," which then included the arts of reading, writing and speaking, is certain. Most likely it was the good Fathers at Palgrave who gave them their first lessons, for St John's stood on the borders of Wortham, whereas the school at Hoxne was some four or five miles distant. However that may have been, the actual school book from which, with "blithe visage and spirit diligent," they learned to write and read their letters remains to this day, scrawled over with their childish signatures.

## CHAPTER II

1487-1524

### COPY-BOOK OF THE BETTYS CHILDREN—A MEMORABLE PAGEANT—A POET LAUREATE RECTOR OF DISS

**T**HIS ancient copy-book dating from about the latter end of the fifteenth century is among the Betts MSS. It is bound in an illuminated fragment of parchment torn from a much older "Book of Hours." As one of the most treasured possessions of the family it was enshrined in an antique and beautiful cabinet in the drawing-room.

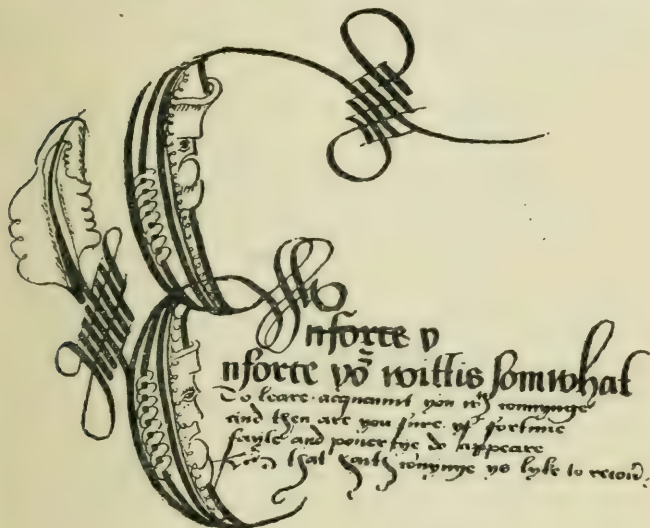
The words to be copied are written on paper, which was then costly, coming mostly from abroad. Quaint capitals adorned with outlines of grotesque heads begin each moral sentence, and continue in alphabetical order down to the letter W.

The home-made ink—one ingredient of which was beer according to the Betts recipes—is as black now as on the day the laborious scribe penned the last maxim: "Whoso kepeth company with a thefe hateth his owne soule."

The Bettys children evidently took their copy-book to school, and in it scrawled remarks about other scholars, to be slyly passed round when the master's eye was elsewhere. Who would not feel for the girl who received this scathing rebuke from her school-fellows: "for her

that is a Miser shalle euer be serued lyke a miser "; or sympathize with the boy who so carefully recorded that " Yt was the vij daye of July that Wyllam Prylles ded Polle my Haar." " Wyllim Whyte giue thys book " is scrawled on another page.

The first of five generations of Betts children to sign



his name was " Rycharde bettes," the boy mentioned in his grandmother's will of 1487, the last signature is that of a schoolboy of 1680: "Scribendo discas scribere: Edmundus Betts."

" Enforce yo<sup>r</sup> Wittes somewhat to leare," counsels the old book, and woe to the youngster who did not learn, for the times were changing.

The long Wars of the Roses had justly brought ruin to the great landowners who had instigated war, but had tended rather to improve the position of the lesser gentry.

The traveller Comines truly said of England just after the wars : " Et tombe le sort et le malheur sur ceulx qui font la guerre." And now while the sons of noblemen were advised that it was enough for them " to wind their horn and carry their hawk fair, and leave study to the children of meaner people," those meaner folk were eagerly reaching up to grasp at the tree of knowledge. New men, new conditions of life, called for new manners, and, above all, for education.

" Lerne somewhat," the Bettys children laboriously copied from their book, " for when Fortune doith Sodeynlie Slake : Connyng remaineth and doith Neuer a man Luyng forsake : as it is red in the Boke of Cato." <sup>1</sup> Wise counsels ; for he who did " lerne somewhat " could, whatever his birth, now aspire, even as did the low-born Cardinal Wolsey, to the highest offices of State.

The rise of the wool trade, bringing prosperity, with the requisite leisure for learning, was largely responsible for this new condition of things.

The " faire felds," pictured in " Piers Plowman," full of folk who had to " swonken ful harde " at " the plow," and later at " setting and sowing," had given place to solitudes of grass."

Bacon described it as a poor man's grievance, that " arable land, which could not be manured without people and families, was turned into pasture which could easily be rid by a few herdmen."

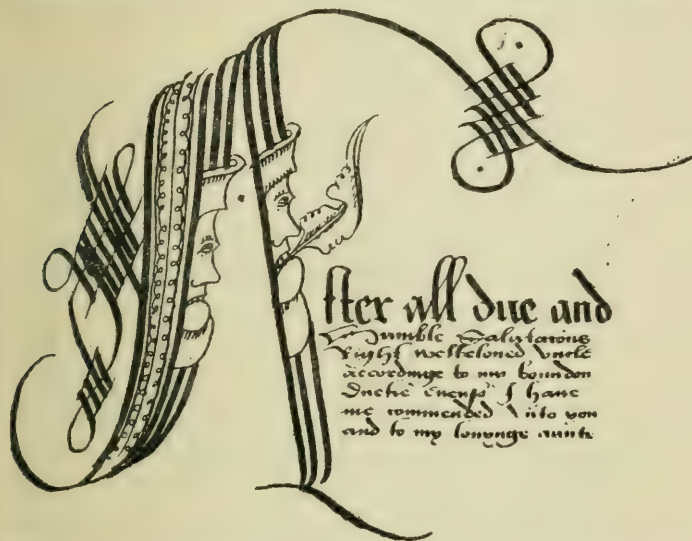
The complaint, " Halfe Englande ys nowght now but shepe," is attributed by a contemporary MS. to the starving countrymen, forced to abandon their unneeded ploughs, for the handicrafts connected with wool.

<sup>1</sup> An English version then lately printed by Caxton of Dionysius Cato.



East Anglia was the centre of the weaving industry. Worsted, a little town in Norfolk, gave its name to worsted stuff; and kersey, a woollen material once popular, is called after Kersey, one of the most picturesque of Suffolk villages.

To equip them for their hoped-for rise in the world, manners were now carefully taught to young people of all classes, and elaborate codes of etiquette were laid down in



“Books of Urbanity.” Even the ancient Betts copy book shows the forms then considered essential in polite letter writing; it teaches the school boy of Anno Domini 1500 to conclude his letter thus:—

“After all due and humble Salutacons  
 Right well beloved Vncle accordinge to  
 My boundon Duetie Sueuss (service) I haue  
 Me commended Vnto You and to my  
 Louynge Aunte.”

About this time, a curious instance of a claim, made under the fast dying feudal law of villeinage, occurred concerning one William Revet a collateral ancestor of the present writer, and through her family of the last generation of the Betts. In 1497, William, living at Rishangles, a village not far from Wortham, was a man of some importance who owned land in five parishes—Cotton, Finningham, Bacton, Rishangles, and Beddingfield.

This from a MS. in the British Museum :—

“ Edmund Earl of Suffolk, on the Monday next before the Feast of St Matthew in the 13th Henry VII., seized upon William Revet senior of Rishangles, at Westhorpe, his villein belonging to a messuage of 124 acres of land, 10 of meadow, and 30 of wood, with the appurtenances, in Cotton, Finningham, and Bacton in Suffolk, and pleaded that he, the said Earl, and his ancestors, had been time out of mind seised of the said William Revet and his ancestors as their villein belonging to the said tenements. To which William Revet replied that he was not his villein but a free man, and joined issue for trial. After which the Earl challenged several of the jury, and at last durst not appear upon the trial. Upon which the jury found the said William Revet a free man, and gave him £100 damages and £20 costs,” amounting to at least twelve or thirteen hundred pounds of our money.

Villeinage died hard, for as late as 1563 the manumission of a villein is recorded at Framlingham. In the eye of the law it lingered for another century.

In 1524 a memorable pageant dazzled the eyes of the Bettys family and the good folk of Wortham. This was

the funeral procession of Thomas Duke of Norfolk, the hero of Flodden, and a "most high, potent and noble prince" in East Anglia.

The Duke died at his castle of Framlingham some twelve miles distant.

The register of Butley Abbey relates that the body, after lying in state in the Castle chapel, "was brought forth in order to its interment at Thetford, and laid in a chariot, and the horses that drew the chariot were finely decked, each having four escutcheons, and on his forehead a small escutcheon beaten in oil with fine gold. Besides mourners' attendants, there were six gentlemen waiting on the chariot, to attend on the noble corpse as time required; and six knights were appointed in every town to be assistants; also attending on the chariot were four hundred staves with torches burning, bowing, and every one of the bearers had a gown and hood."

"The order and procession was," says the monkish chronicler, "very magnificent; first went three coaches of friars, then the minister of the church followed by his chaplain, then the standard borne by—Windham Esqre., then a general assemblage of knights, esquires, gentlemen of his household, all with staves in their hands and their horses trapped; then his banner borne by Sir Edward Bray Knt., his coat of arms and the helmet and crest by two heralds, the targer of his arms by Clarancieux king of arms, and the coat of arms, which was to be offered, by garter king of arms, all of whom rode in their liveries of black, their hoods on their heads, their horses trapped, and on every one of them four escutcheons of his arms. Then came the chariot in which the noble corpse lay garnished,

then followed the chief mourner, the Duke's second son Lord William Howard, the eldest, the Earl of Surrey, being with the King's grace on business, and in a space behind him the other mourners two and two riding together in their long gowns of black cloth, their hoods on their heads ; next came the chamberlain with his staff, and the Master of the horse leading a sumpter horse trapped in fine cloth of gold garnished with escutcheons of his arms"—the only touch of colour this, in the long procession. "After which followed all other lords, knights, and gentlemen in black according to their degree, to the number of nine hundred."

"In every town and village they were met by the minister singing such service as thereunto belonged, and every town had 6/8 and an escutcheon of his arms." At Hoxne the Bishop of Norwich came forth from his palace robed "in Pontificalibus with all the procession of the place singing the service appointed." Passing close to Wortham, the funeral train neared the town of Diss in the dusk of the evening, and there was met "with all the procession of the church, choir and town," the rector John Skelton at their head.

This John Skelton rector of Diss, was a man of note and a near neighbour of the Bettys. Orator royal, court poet, and former tutor to King Henry VIII., he was honoured by Erasmus "as the sole light and ornament of British scholarship." Laureate at three Universities, Oxford, Cambridge and Louvain, he signed his name : "Master John Skelton, Laureate, parson of Disse," as witness to the will of a parishioner in 1504. Laureateship was then an actual degree, the scholar who gained it being "solemnly crowned, or his temples adorned with a



wreath of laurel : that is, decorated in the arts of rhetorick and grammar."

The pomp of the great Duke's funeral procession, and the lowly homage paid to the " noble corpse," which rested for one night in the choir of the black hung church of Diss, may well have inspired Skelton's lines :—

" There may no franchise,  
Nor worldly bliss,  
Redeem us from this,  
Our days be dated  
To be checkmated  
With draughts of Death."

Early next morning the new Duke took his place as chief mourner, and was brought to mass at the parish church of Diss by the king at arms and heralds, Sir William Finlay knight chamberlain to the deceased, bearing up his train, the Earl of Oxford<sup>1</sup> delivering to him his offering, and the other mourners following according to their degree. And then the procession was again marshalled, and started on the twelve remaining miles to Thetford in the same order as before.

The Monks' chronicle does not tell us which of two roads the procession now followed : there are two. By the shortest way it would have passed through both Wortham and the adjoining parish of Redgrave.

Of Redgrave the rector at that time was Cardinal Wolsey, who had been a friend, but later became a most bitter enemy of our rector of Diss : Skelton having made the Cardinal the butt of some caustic lines. " The poet's satirical wit," says Fuller, " was unhappy to light on

<sup>1</sup> The Earl was Hereditary Lord High Chamberlain.

three, "Noli me tangeres: the rod of a school-master (Lilly, the grammarian), the cowls of friars (the Dominicans whom he scourged in his 'Image of Vpocracy'), and the cap of a Cardinal. The first gave him a lash, the second deprived him of his livelihood, and the third almost ousted him of his life."



## CHAPTER III

1518-1547

SUBSIDY RETURNS FOR WORTHAM—"MEDICINS FOR ALL  
MANNER OF WOUNDES"—DOCTOR JOHN BETTYS

**I**N the dining-room at Wortham, before the house was dismantled in 1906, hung a quaint panel portrait of Philip Chute or Chowte, who for his services as standard-bearer to Henry VIII. at the siege of Boulogne was granted a canton with the lion of England as an augmentation to his ancient coat of arms.

Chute, who held the office of steward of Anne of Cleves, Suffolk estates, was connected by his sister's and daughter's marriages with the Wortham families of Waller Allyn and Taylor.<sup>1</sup> One of these families, it is probable, gave a wife to a Bettys—the maiden name of more than one Mistress Bettys of the sixteenth century not appearing in the family pedigree—through whom this portrait may have found a home at Wortham.

Henry VIII.'s ineffectual yet costly wars laid a heavy burden of taxation on his people. To fill an emptied exchequer the King in 1524 demanded a subsidy from Parliament, which was refused. But monarchs such as he had a summary method of gaining supplies.

Having sent for the leader of the opposition Mr Edward

<sup>1</sup> Alys Bettes, widow of Rycharde Bettes, was admitted in 1559 to a piece of land called "Ebyll once John Tailors."

Montagu, who knelt before him, the King, laying a heavy hand on his head, addressed him roughly :—

“ Ho ! man, will they not suffer my bill to pass ? Get my bill passed by to-morrow, or this head of yours shall be off.”

The subsidy was granted after that, but its collection caused great discontent and riots in Suffolk and Norfolk.

“ Who is your captain ? ” inquired the Duke of Norfolk to the Norwich insurgents. “ His name,” they answered, “ is Poverty, for he and his cousin Necessity have brought us to this doing.”

This Duke was he who had been chief mourner at his father’s magnificent funeral.

The unpopular subsidy seems to have been collected without any difficulty at Wortham ; we have the official returns for that parish which show that only one other parishioner was taxed higher than John Bettys the elder.

The name, “ John Bettys son, off Fenn Street,” also appears in the return. This John, the younger, appears to have been a scholar who travelled much in distant lands, and it seems probable that in later life he entered a religious order. Of this there is some inferential evidence. A very curious and interesting MS. book of mediæval medicine found among the Betts papers is attributed to him. The coarse hand-made paper pages of this book are roughly stitched together, and the cover, if one ever existed, has been destroyed. It contains twelve lengthy prescriptions, headed : “ Medicins for all manner of woundes to drawe and heale them, be thay never so bade, olde or newe.” In one place the writer speaks of coming from Jerusalem in 1518.

Perhaps the most strange and curious prescription, where all are strange and curious, is this : " To make an oyle of red dog : by meanes wher of besides other infiniet vertues yt it haith : i haue healed a frior of Snt. Onofares who had by ye space of 12 yeares a lame and drye withered arme like a sticke so yt natuer gaue it no more nourishment.

" Taike a young dog of red haire : and keap him 3 dayes without meat : and then strangell him with a corde and let him lye dead a qwarter of an hower : and in ye meane time boyle a kettell of oyle upon ye fire : and put ye dog in hole or in peases : it maketh no mater howe : so yt he be all ther with his skine and haire : and make him seeth so vntille he be all most sodden to peases keaping allwaies ye keattell close couered : in ye mean time taike scorpions to ye number of four skore or a 100 : and put them in a bason on ye fire : vntill they be thoroughly burned : then put them in ye said kittel with ye dog and ye oyle : puting to it a good dish full of great grownd wormes well washed : a good hand full of saint iohns worte : a hand full of wilde or marsh mallowes : and a hand full of wallworte : with an ounce of safrone : seeth all these thinges welle together : vntill ye flesh of ye dog be broken and fallen in peases : and because ye must haue much oyle : ye may at ye first put into ye kittel to partes of watter and one parte of oyle : and in seething ye maye power in water vntill ye dog be all together broken as is all redy saide then let it wax cold : after this ye shall taike ye bones of him and ye herbes : and when ye haue presed and squissed them well : yt all ye substance remaine in ye saide oyle : cast them away : this doone : you shall taike onlye yt which is aboue vpon ye said water : yt is to saie : ye oyle and ye grease :

and cast away ye water if ther be much : but if ther be but littell : so yt you can scant discern ye oyle from ye water : ye shall taike all together : for a littell water cannot be but good : then straine it throughe a strainer or canues : first weated or steeped in white wine : and taike then vnguentum agrippe 7 or 8 ounces : of ye marie of a gambon and bones of a hogge : a pownde : of ye marie of ye hind thighes of an asse : a pownde : or as much as ye may gite : put all these thinges to gether with ye said oyle and grease : and make it seeth vpon ye fire : then ade to it a dish full or an halfe of oyle of roset : and when it seetheth : you shall put to it 3 ounces of masticke : 2 ounce of gumme elem : 8 ounces of red waxe : but ye masticke and ye gumme must be well beaten into powder and sifted and when all this haith boyled by ye spaice of halfe an hower let it coole againe and set it in ye sun in som kind of vessell well couered by ye spaice of sartaine dayes : then shall you hau an excelent substance and mater for all kindes of cold infirmities : and for many other : and as i hau all redy sayed i hau seen the experience of it in a fryer of saint onofrey : yt is to say : of them that weare an habite of roane couler : but as he said he dwelt in ye monastarie : because of ye said infirmitie of his left arme which was as drye as ye branche of a withered tree : more ouer : he said vnto me : yt he did not remember : nor could tell whether yt chanced to him ether by sickness : or by som wounde or hurte : ye said arme was becom smaller than ye other all moste by halfe : so yt ye saide arme had all most no strength at all : and could not help itself in any wise : I caused him to be anointed with ye saide oyle which i had set in ye sunne ye sommer of ye year a 1000 500 47 by ye spaice of 12 miserere : and maide him tarye in ye



sunne vntill ye said oyle was dried up : and had perced thorowe ye saide arme : and within 55 dayes men did peiceaue and see perfectly : yt ye vaines gau nourishment vnto ye member : 9 days after ye arme was as full of flesh as ye other : and with ye help of god was as hole an sownde : as thoughe it had neuer bine hurte : this saide ointment or oyle is a precious thing and good for all cold infirmities and for ye goute : and especiall ye for all contractions or shrinkings together of sinewes or members or woundes : all be it ye man were wounded in ye midst of ye body : in puting to it this oyle shall a maraculous thinge be seene : and it is all so good for ye sinnewes : as i came from ierusalem in ye year 1518 in a shipe of ye which ye maister was called peter de chioggia we wer set vpon by 5 foystes of pirates on this side corphu : and on of ye mariners so attainted with ye stroake of a gunne : yt he had his arme brused and broken : and with ye same blowe another hurt in ye breast : ye phisitian wold hau cut of ye arme : but amonge other things yt I carried aboute with me : I founde a boxe of ye saied ointment : wher with I annointed his arme : and in ye space of 6 or 7 dayes he was healed marraculously : I hau maid many experiences : as well vpon myself as vpon others : and hauing giuen of it unto diuers men to ayde them selves with all : they hau tolde me yt they hau founde in it a maruelous vertye and operation : if you doe make this oyle in ye time when ye herbe saint iohns worte is found : you shall put in ye herbe : ye blosom : and ye seed : but if it be in ye time when it cannot be found : after ye hau maide ye first decoction of ye dogge : as we hau saied : yee shall boyle ye oyle and grease ouer againe puting to it ye oyle of saint iohns worte : wher of we hau spoken before : or



as ye may get it : yt is to say : halfe as much as all ye oyle and grease is and if you cannot find : bismalue or wild mallows : you may put in stead of it ye ointment called dialtea : which is commonly fownd at ye apotheraries and when ye will boyle ye dogge in ye kittell : it shall be good to put in three tortoses yt liue on ye land and not on ye water : and so shall ye said ointment be very excelent for ye gouet : a sartaine man of min aqwantage of ye age of 30 years vexed with ye gowte whome i maide taike of this oyle : and annointe him self a littell in ye plaice of ye griefe and abowte it : puting to it 2 partes of oyle roset : one part of ye oyle yiolets and 2 partes of ye oyle of dogge : told me yt he had fownd maruelous ease and help by it and ye said griefe returned again 4 sundery times yet anointing him self ther with 3 times as is a fore said ye paine came to him no more in ye spaice of 3 yeares yt we wer in rome together : which was ye year 1514 and this man was called drogo a portingall and dwelt at ye mount iordan : sith yt time being gon to venies and from thens to leuent I hau heard nothing of him."

John Bettys the younger is mentioned in his grandmother's will made in 1487, as the eldest of the five children of John and Elizabeth Bettys ; he would have been a few years over thirty at the time of his sojourn in Rome with "Drogo, a Portingall." The supposition that he had entered religion is strengthened by the fact that he did not inherit the Wortham estate which passed to his brother Rycharde. Moreover it is noteworthy that the prescription alludes to a long sojourn in Rome and a toilsome journey to Jerusalem. And again, the treatment prescribed for the friar's withered arm would certainly

have subjected him if a layman to prosecution in the Courts Christian of that day.

Here is a case in point from Hale's *Precedents* :—

One William Browne was in 1527 accused in the court of the Commissary of London at Bow, for that he used art magic and incantations for horses. He confessed that his practice was to collect certain herbs and other things, and that he said the Lord's Prayer five times, the *Salutatio Angelica* five times, and *Symbolus Apostolorum* three times, and that with those medicines he cured a horse of a disease called "the fasshyns." No doubt poor William duly suffered punishment for his dire offence, but what his penance was we do not know, as the case was adjourned to the next court, and is not further reported by Arch-deacon Hale.

In our old traveller's account of the attack made on the pilgrim's ship by pirates off Corfu in 1518, "the stroake of a gunne" which "attainted one of ye mariners," shows that fire arms were already beginning to take the place of bows and arrows. Not even Martin Luther's denunciations could check "the inventions and multiplications of those cruel, damnable machines, the direct suggestion of the devil": mynards, hagsters, culverins, flings, falcons, double-dogs, pestilent serpentes, and the bassils or basilicks which from the galleys and foysts of Henry VIII.'s navy were, it was said, capable of destroying an enemy's ship at one blow.

Another of the old doctor's ointments "whose vertyes are infinit" was concocted of: "3 black vippers and vennemous: 3 serpentes: 3 snakes: 3 litell serpentes called aspide: 3 vipers: 3 toades and 10 of those litell beastes called in lataine tartantula or stelliones: which

be like unto lizards : 50 scorpions and if you can git any other vennemouse beasts : put them in qwicke."

White wine and "ye oyle of sanct iohn's worte" was to be added to "ye oyle of ye said beastes," blossoms of celandine and "ye iuce of crispina rubra, called in some plases cardonello : and in venice sigone : it is a very precious herbe : i saw," says the scribe, "once a man : yt cleft a yonge kidds head : all most a sunder and after laid to it : only ye iuce of ye said red crispine : and ioyhned ye head together : and bownd it with a band : and in 2 days ye kidde was healed : as sounde as he was before."

The "caudron," which contained the ingredients, "it shall be good to set in manner of a furnes : as it wer to make salt peter or as sope caudrons be set." When camphor was added "then must ye sudenly couer it : for ye campher is so fihne and dilicate : yt it wolde incontinent breathe out and vanish a waye."

"Princes," said the learned doctor, "ought to command thys ointment to be made in ther commonweathes : and yt it shold be maid in ye presens of phisickians : as treacle is maid."

"Treacle" refers to "Venice treacle," a horrible mixture of vipers, white wine, opium, spices, red roses, treacle, mustard, and St John wort with other herbs, which was said to have been first made by Nero's physician. So late as the seventeenth century Venice treacle was, we read, taken nightly by Sir Ralph Verney, who procured it for 19 livres a pound from a shop near St Marks in Venice.

In the foregoing prescriptions, vipers, scorpions and other "venemous beastes" find a place, for the reason

that by their poisonous character they were believed to destroy poison, even that of their own bites :—

“ Venym fordoth Venym and that I proue by resain  
 For of alle venymes foulest is the scorioun  
 May no medcyne helpe the place there he styngeth  
 Til he be ded, and do thereto the yuel he destroyeth.”

## CHAPTER IV

1521-1549

### PAPISTS AND PROTESTANTS—RESULTS OF THE DISSOLUTION OF MONASTERIES, AND THE SPOILIATION OF PARISH GILDS

**W**ITH the Betts papers was found an "Extent, and true Terrier (made in 1623) of all such houses, messuages, Lands, pastures, medowes, feedinges and liberties, as doth belonge to ye Rectorie and p̃sonage of Wortham Eastgate, by Thomas Leverington then incumbent, according to extent (which had been) mde in the Incumbencie of George Jarvis then Incumbent & Parson in the reign of Henry eighth."

The names of neither this George Jarvis, nor of his contemporary Rector of Wortham Southmore, George Everarde, can ever be forgotten at Wortham, for since their incumbency the proper distinctive names of the two medieties have been dropped, and these are colloquially called Wortham Jarvis and Wortham Everarde to this day. The reason for this was perhaps that the two rectors differed as to the right of the King to usurp the Papal authority, and their separate flocks accordingly ranged themselves, each under its leader's name. If this were so, it is not hard to guess which side was taken by John Bettys, and after his death which occurred before 1538, by Rycharde his son, for in the



library at Wortham were found two books of completely contrary views, with just twenty-two years between their dates of publication. The first in all probability reflected the father's opinions, the second those of the son.

The first of these books published in 1521, is Henry VIII.'s "*Assertio Septem Sacramentorum adversus Martin Lutherum*," for which treatise the King was rewarded, as all the world knows, with the title of Defender of the Faith. This fine copy, a first edition with a woodcut border to the title by Holbein, was sold at Sotheby's in 1906 for £37, 10s.

By the other book, "*A necessary Doctrine & Erudition for any Christian man set furthe by the Kynges Maiestie of Englande*," the royal author, in 1543, claimed to be supreme head of the Church, and to appropriate to himself all monies which had formerly been sent abroad to the Pope.

Wortham, situate where it was, could not have failed to be a veritable battlefield for conflicting religious opinions.

On the Pope's side, the great abbey of St Edmundsbury must have exerted a strong temporal as well as religious influence. As patrons of half the church and lords of the manor of "*Wortham Abbots*," the monks still held their customary court yearly at the stone villa which Abbot Samson had built (in the adjoining parish), on the site of what is now Redgrave Hall; and it was as true in the sixteenth as it had been in the twelfth century that "*the men of Norfolk and Suffolk loved St Edmund greatly.*"

Moreover, tenancy of the Abbey lands conferred special and valuable privileges. The Abbot and Convent of Bury had the right to exact oppressive tolls on all goods which out-dwellers brought into the town for sale, but such out-

dwellers as held lands of the Abbey were entitled, on payment of the town penny, to have their names written in the alderman's roll as free men, whereby they escaped all other payments, and acquired the right to have their causes tried by the oaths of their neighbours instead of by the courts Baron and Leet.

On the King's side, the influence and following of Thomas Bilney and Thomas Arthur, who at this time were preaching the doctrines of the Reformation throughout East Anglia, were great and were daily increasing.

Can it be that the Bettys and their neighbours could have refrained from taking sides with one or the other of the religious parties. We know that within a mile of Rycharde Bettys' home there lived one Nicholas Bokenham, a grandson it is likely, of the John Bokynham, mentioned in Beatys Wryght's will of 1462. Nicholas was cousin to one of the best known controversialists on the side of the old religion, Dr Robert Buckenham or Bokenham, prior of the Black Friars of Cambridge, and one of Latimer's most bitter opponents. To him had been committed the task of refuting, by an answering sermon at Cambridge, Latimer's arguments respecting the general use of the Bible by the laity. His views thereon are remarkable :—

“ If,” said he, “ that heresy should prevail, we should soon see an end of anything useful among us. The plowman, reading that if he should put his hand to the plow and should happen to look back, he was unfit for the Kingdom of God, would soon lay aside his labour. The baker likewise, reading that a little leaven will corrupt the lump would give us very insipid bread. The simple man likewise, finding himself commanded to pluck out

his eyes, in a few years we should have the nation full of blind beggars."

Of the opposite opinion, another near neighbour of the Bettys, Antony Yaxley of Rickinghall, was an ardent partizan on the Protestant side. This unfortunate gentleman, being "detecte" before the austere Richard Nix "busshope of Norwich," had in 1525 been forced to sign a recantation before his "Reverend ffathirhode" at his lordship's palace in Hoxne.

Then, at Redgrave there lived Dr Butts, trusted physician of King Henry VIII., and a learned man of enlightened views and Protestant leanings. It may well be that Rycharde Bettys, himself a follower of Master Bilney, escaped being "detecte," as was the unlucky Yaxley, through the protection of this influential neighbour. Butts is said by Foxe to have been a special favourer of good opinions, and to have twice used his influence with the King to gain preferment for Latimer, at the second time, by help of Cromwell, procuring him the bishoprick of Worcester.

In the National Gallery hangs a portrait of this Dr Edmund Butts, painted by a certain John Bettes in 1545. Though nothing is definitely known as to the artist's parentage, it seems more than likely that he was a member of the family of the Bettys of Wortham, the doctor's near neighbours.

How deeply the old Church had struck its roots into the life of the people, even such unsympathetic documents as the deeds which were in the Wortham muniment room, bear witness. There are a hundred or so Betts charters from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, and not one but is dated by a Saint's day, or by some Sunday

for which a special service had been appointed. For instance, one bears date "Wednesday after the Feast of St Matthew 40th Edward III."; another, "The Sunday on which Misericordia Domini is sung 43rd Edward III." And so, even long after the Reformation farming operations continued to be begun on specified Holy Days. Tusser, the East Anglian poet and farmer, writing in Elizabeth's reign, dates all his farm work from Saints' days, such as: "The day of St Stephen old fathers did use for bleeding horses"; again, "Set garlic and pease at St Edmond the King." And the regular religious had taken a strong hold on the business of rural society; the monks had won respect from the folk of the country-side as being the best of landlords. The old saw, "Good living under the crook," was often in men's mouths; and, moreover, they had excellent skill, and were practical exemplars of the farmer's craft.

On the other hand, the weakness and danger of the religious orders was their enormous wealth; it was said that no less than half of the entire land of England was in the hands of the monks. One Abbey, the Benedictine House of Bury, possessed in Suffolk alone, no less than eighty-one manors and forty churches, and their rent roll amounted to the equivalent of at least £23,360 of our money. The end was inevitable, for while the religious houses were weak, the King was poor, and his power was absolute.

In 1528, the first stone was thrown against them by the small relentless hand of Anne Boleyn, who then presented to the King, Simon Fish's "Supplication of the Beggars." In this treatise it was craftily stated that the reason why the fifteenths and subsidies which "Your Grace most



tenderly and of great compassion hath taken among your people . . . have been so slothfully yea painfully levied ” was because “ the uttermost penny had been beforehand gathered by the five orders of friars. And what remedy is it to endow hospitals to relieve the poor, sick, lame and sore bedesmen ? ” argued Fish, “ for ever the fat of the whole foundation hangeth on the priests’ beard.” The book having been read to the King, His Majesty made this enigmatical comment thereon. “ If a man should pull down an old stone wall and begin at the lower part, the upper part might chance to fall on his head.” True enough, no doubt, but the Sovereign’s sage reflection, did not save the lesser convents, which met their fate in 1536, three years before the fall of the greater houses.

Amongst the lesser houses which were first dissolved and robbed was that of the Bettys’ neighbours, the community of the Priory of Eye. Two years previously, in the vain hope of obtaining a reprieve, the Prior and his eight monks had subscribed to the supremacy of the King, but it had availed them nothing ; they were now driven forth, their revenues confiscated, and all books, archives, and registers, and the family records which had been deposited with them, were lost or destroyed.

Among their archives was the celebrated Red Book of Eye. This sacred and revered volume was a MS. copy of the Gospels written in Lombard characters. It had been brought to England in the seventh century by St Felix the Burgundian, bishop of Dunwich, and the first missionary to preach the gospel in Suffolk. It had been treasured at Dunwich, till the sea encroaching threatened its safety there, when it was removed to Eye. Of such sanctity



was this Red Book that oaths sworn upon it were deemed of special solemnity.<sup>1</sup>

Then in 1539, a yet greater upheaval shook the fabric of rural society at Wortham. The princely house of St Edmundsbury, second only in magnificence to Glastonbury Abbey, was dissolved; and John de Melford, last of a long line of mitred abbots, with his shrunken following of sixty-two monks, was driven out to die presently in grief and obscurity. Some years before the final fall of the Convent, the King's visitors had robbed the "ryche shryne" which they found "very cumbrous to deface," of most of its glory, and "takyn in the Monastery in gold and silver M.M.M.M.M. (5000) marks, and above over and besyde, a riche crosse with emreld, as also dyvers and sundry stones of great value," and yet, so runs their report "we have left the Church Abbott & Convent very well furnished, with plate & silver necessary for the same."

The manor of Wortham Abbots, then wrested from the Abbey, was granted by the Royal Robber, to a rising young lawyer, Nicholas Bacon by name, a former scholar of the monks' far-famed school.

Rycharde Bettys was one of the tenants of the manor of Wortham Abbots. Among the family papers is a

<sup>1</sup> Leland, when commissioned by Henry VIII. to examine all ecclesiastical libraries, saw the Red Book while in possession of the monks. Two centuries later Bishop Tanner refers to it as "in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge," an assertion believed now to be incorrect. Dr James, in his "Sources of Archbishop Parker's Collection of MSS. at Corpus Christi College," published in 1899, says he had heard, on good authority, that the book which Leland saw was in possession of the municipality of Eye until quite recent times, and that it had been, within living memory, cut up for game labels! He believes Tanner confused the Red Book of the Peak of Derbyshire, which is certainly at Corpus Christi College, with the Red Book of Eye.

copy of Court Roll dated 1535, being the surrender by him to the use of his will. He had lately married, and this prudent surrender enabled him to dispose by will of his copyhold land, which otherwise would, according to the ancient custom of Borough English prevailing in the manor, have gone to the youngest son.

It is interesting to note that the descriptions of certain copyhold lands in this surrender of 1535, are in the very same words, by which the same lands were described when the estate was sold in 1907. It is also the fact, as has been before stated, that the house in which Rycharde Bettys was born and died still forms the oldest part of the existing mansion, and that about a hundred acres of freehold land owned by him in the reign of Henry VIII. can be clearly identified with the site of the present garden and park.

In the year 1538, Thomas Cromwell, Vicar-General and Vicegerent of the King, issued an injunction that a book of register should be kept in every parish, wherein should be written every wedding, christening, and burying.<sup>1</sup>

The parish register of Wortham, “ Tyme’s dumb recorder,” has since that date chronicled the births, marriages, and deaths of the Betts of Wortham.

Rycharde Bettys and his wife Alys had already had two sons, George and Thomas, before the establishment of the register. The baptism of John, the third son, is

<sup>1</sup> This order reached parson Jarvis of Wortham through the hands of William Rugg, bishop of Norwich. Bishop Rugg had been the last ruling abbot of St Benets Hulm, Norfolk, an abbey which was never dissolved, its barony and revenue being transferred together with its abbot to the See of Norwich. The bishops of Norwich claim to be titular abbots of St Benets to this day.

registered in 1538, that of Hillary (or Harry) in 1541, and that of Elizabeth the only daughter in 1545. Another son, also baptized John, and called John the younger to distinguish him from his elder brother, was baptized in 1548.

This year 1548 was not to be soon forgotten. In spite of the efforts of Archbishop Cranmer to delay the measure, the Act passed for the dissolution of gilds, chapels, and chauntries. Cranmer had striven to postpone it till King Edward should come of age, and hoped then to gain his permission to bestow the foundations on impoverished impropriate rectories.

By this legalized robbery, the Wortham gild of St Trinity was deprived of all its property, which was held to—what were in the eye of the law—"superstitious uses."

The neighbouring little town of Diss had a notable experience. The town gilds of St Nicholas and Corpus Christi had in 1500 purchased an estate in Framlingham with a fund raised by generations of self-denying brethren. In 1508, the four original trustees infeoffed fifteen more, and "by an English Schedule annexed, declared the uses of the Feofment, viz. : that a Bailly or officer, by them or the Moste Parte in Nombre of them appointed, shall perceyve the yerly profites of the Londes, where-with an honest and govenable secular Preist, by the most Parte of the Cofeoffees to be named, hired and waged competently, yerly to synge or seye Masses & other devygne Service, for the Sowles of the Brethren & Sistem of the Gildes, in the Parishe Church of Disse, by the Terme of LXXXXIX yeres, & at the End of the seid LXXXXIX yeres, the Feofees their Heirs and

Assignes for suche Price as they or the Moste Parte of them in Nombre, canne agree, shall sell all of the Premises and with the money therefor comying, shall fynde annuelly, an honest govenabill secular Preest to synge for the Sowlys aforeseid for ever, *if it so may be contynued, by the Ordour of the Lawe.*" The overplus was to be laid out in repairing the steeple, church, and streets.

Thus the gilds continued till this fateful year of 1548, when their property was seized under the Act. The townsmen objected, and stood an action with the King; it appearing, however, that the term of the feoffment was not expired, they could do no good in the affair, and it continued in the Crown till the 43rd of Elizabeth. In that year, the Queen granted the lands to Thomas Mildmay, at the rent of £4. To this Thomas succeeded Thomas Mildmay his son under the grant. However, the original feoffment and the due succession of feoffees had been carefully preserved, and in 1608, when the ninety-nine years expired, one John Shreeve and the rest of the then feoffees, entered upon the premises, ejecting Thomas Mildmay, and John Wood his tenant. They pleaded that these lands had been settled to superstitious uses for ninety-nine years only, and that they could now employ them, as lawfully they could do, for repairing their church and streets. The title of John Shreeve was duly proved, and in the result the lands were given by verdict to the town.

Three of the four original feoffees of these gild lands—Thomas Cooper, of Diss, rafman, Edward Cooper, and Thomas Folser (Fulcher), were ancestors of a later generation of the Betts family; and to a son of the fourth, John Lowdale, a conveyance of land was preserved



among the family papers, to which "Rycharde Bettes de Wortham" affixed his signature as a witness.

But though the townsmen of Diss had such success with this affair, they met with the contrary in relation to other lands in the same feoffment, namely, a close called Chawmpennys in Diss and Frenze, which together with other acres were given to find "lamps & Anniversaries for ever." The curious name of this close is evidently that of the original owner; for three small parchments found at Wortham, dated 1430, 1439, and 1449 respectively, are grants and leases of land, from John Chawmpennys of Dysse and another to William Revet of Dysse and others.

It is grievous to reflect that all over England the slowly accumulated gild property, representing the savings of generations of toiling men and women, was swept into the King's treasury, to be by and by parcelled out to greedy courtiers, by the oligarchy who ruled in the boy King's name.

The natural consequence of the dissipation of the wealth, first of the Church, the patrimony of the poor and then of the parish gilds, was that the kingdom soon became infested with sturdy vagabonds and wandering dispossessed monks, an evil which was met by the disgraceful enactment that any man found loitering without work for three days, could be adjudged by a Justice to be the slave of the prosecutor for two years, and to have the letter V marked with a red-hot iron upon his breast.

And the changed conditions brought about by the Dissolution pressed hardly upon the the copyhold tenants of manors. "The new lords," so reads "The Supplication of the poor Commons" (in 1546), "make



us so in doubt with their threatenings that we dare do naught but bring into their courts copies taken of the Convents of the late dissolved monasteries, and these they pretend are void." The commons complained also, that they "could get no farm, tenement, or cottage, at these men's hands, without we pay them more than we are able to make."

Actually King Edward VI.'s primer of private prayer invoked Divine aid "to endow covetous worldings with more humane views."

The pitiable state of the out-of-work labourers—for more and more land was being laid down to grass—awoke the compassion of John Hales, a member of the Commons House. He brought in three bills: "For the pacifying of the people, and making the conditions of the poor easier against grasiers, and gentlemen who inclose commons and neglect tillage," which were debated but not passed in the second parliament of Edward VI.

In 1549, the general discontent in East Anglia brought about Kett's rebellion. Kett was a substantial yeoman of Wymondham in Norfolk, not twenty miles from Wortham; the reforms he desired we should now regard as no more than reasonable; but the remedy he endeavoured to apply, no other being available, was force.

He headed an insurrection of over 16,000 men of Suffolk and Norfolk. It had to be put down, after much cruelty and bloodshed, by the strong arm of the law; Kett the leader was hanged in chains from the top of Norwich Castle, his brother William from Wymondham steeple; and the "Oak of Reformation" on Mousehold Heath, near Norwich, under which Kett had administered rough justice, was used as a gallows for his unhappy followers.

## CHAPTER V

1555-1559

“ RYCHARDE BETTES DE WORTHAM ”

“ **T**HE native dweller,” who, as an American poet writes, keeps “ the old dull round of things,” is slow to forget or forgive.

When six years after Kett’s outbreak the Duke of Northumberland marched into Suffolk to gather support for his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, the cruelties he had as Earl of Warwick inflicted on “ Hob Dic & Hic,” Kett’s unfortunate followers, were still fresh in men’s memories.

Princess Mary, who had fled to her manor of Kenninghall, not many miles from Wortham, was believed to have favoured Kett’s enterprise ; and to her standard flocked from Suffolk and Norfolk both loyal men and sympathizers of all degrees. On the other hand, Northumberland was so generally mistrusted, that it was even whispered that he had hastened the King’s end, panic-struck at a “ smart jest ” of young Edward’s making. The story ran that one day when shooting at the butt, the King’s arrow struck the very white. “ Well aimed, My Liege,” cried the mighty Duke. “ But,” answered “ the boy King,” “ you aimed better when you struck off the head of my uncle Somerset.”

Rycharde Bettes is unlikely on account of his age (he

was then seventy) to have been among those who rallied round the "Quene's Gras" at Kenninghall; it is highly probable, however, that his elder sons followed in the train of Sir Thomas Cornwaleys of Brome, a near neighbour of the Wortham family, and for that year high sheriff for Norfolk and Suffolk.

But old Rycharde Bettles may perchance have seen the Queen, for on Mary's subsequent flight from Kenninghall, she and her loyal following crossed the Waveney only a mile above his house at Wortham, on their way to Framlingham.

On the attainder of the Duke of Norfolk in the reign of Henry VIII., the castle of Framlingham had become forfeit to the Crown, and had, upon the duke's petition "that being stately gear it might be bestowed on one of the Royal children," been granted at a later date to the Princess Mary, and there, Foxe asserts, "to her resorted the Suffolk men; who being always forward in promoting the Gospel, promised her their aid and help."

They stipulated that "she should not attempt an alteration of the religion, which her brother King Edward had before established by law"; and to this condition she is said to have agreed, "with such promises to them that no innovation should be made in the matter of religion, that no man could or would then have doubted her." But once firmly established on the throne, she ignored her former promises, and returned this ungracious answer to their "Humble Supplication." "Fore-as-much as you, being but members, desire to rule your head, you shall one day well perceive that members must obey their head, and not look to bear rule over it."

Mary's first step was the removal of Protestant clergy,

and among others, William Collinson, the rector of Wortham Eastgate, was deprived in the first year of her reign.

The heretical opinions of Rycharde Bettes passed undetected by George Ferrers, Collinson's easygoing successor. No doubt he was excused from attending mass on account of his age and infirmities; but should his house have been searched, enough evidence would have been found to bring him to the stake. For Rycharde possessed two Bibles in English; a Cranmer's of 1541, and the "Matthew's Version" by Edward Becke of 1549, both of which retained their place in the Wortham library till the sale of 1906.

A second appeal by the Protestants of Norfolk and Suffolk in 1556, to the commissioners then sent by the Queen to inquire into matters of religion, served, if anything, to exasperate the cruelty of persecution. It was in this year that two men, Robert Lawson and John Noyes, who must both have been well known to the Bettes family, were taken from the dungeon of Eye to the market place of Bury St Edmunds, there to suffer martyrdom.

These were dark times England over. Dwellers in villages such as Wortham, once homes of peace, now endured the torture of anxious uncertainty, none could tell who might be the next victim.

Yet, however imminent the peril, however great the distress of mind, daily life had still to be carried on, to outward appearance much as usual. Dame Alys Bettes, we may be sure, continued to rise betimes to see to the ways of her household, watched the kine milked, made or superintended the making of cheese and butter, while her

daughter Elizabeth decocted simples from herbs gathered in the sunny walled herb garden, which still exists. The day declining, Alys would set her maidens to work at spinning, and weaving cloth and linen for household uses. The wool was supplied by her husband's flocks ; the hemp and flax, too, was grown on the estate, for then by law a quarter of an acre had to be yearly sown with these crops, on farms of sixty or more arable acres.

And Master Rycharde Bettes, though well stricken in years, would not have ceased to frequently “ manure the ground with the master's foot, and provender the larder with his eye.” Accompanied perhaps by his elder sons he would set his men “ on work.” Sometimes, too, he would oversee the netting of the river Waveney where it ran through his estate, for fish were indispensable for the then re-established weekly fast day.

Again, mounted on his ambling hobby, we can picture old Rychardes traversing the few miles which separate the parishes of Wortham and Brome, to watch with interest the building of Sir Thomas Cornwaleys' stately new house.

“ Who built Brome Hall ? ”

runs a contemporary rhyme,

“ Sir Thomas Cornwaleys.  
How did he build it ?  
By the taking of Calays.”

But was not this a libel on a noble gentleman ? Sir Thomas was a Roman Catholic, and, though knight of the shire, was for that reason generally unpopular. He had resigned his office as treasurer of Calais about two months



before the loss of that brightest jewel in the English Crown.

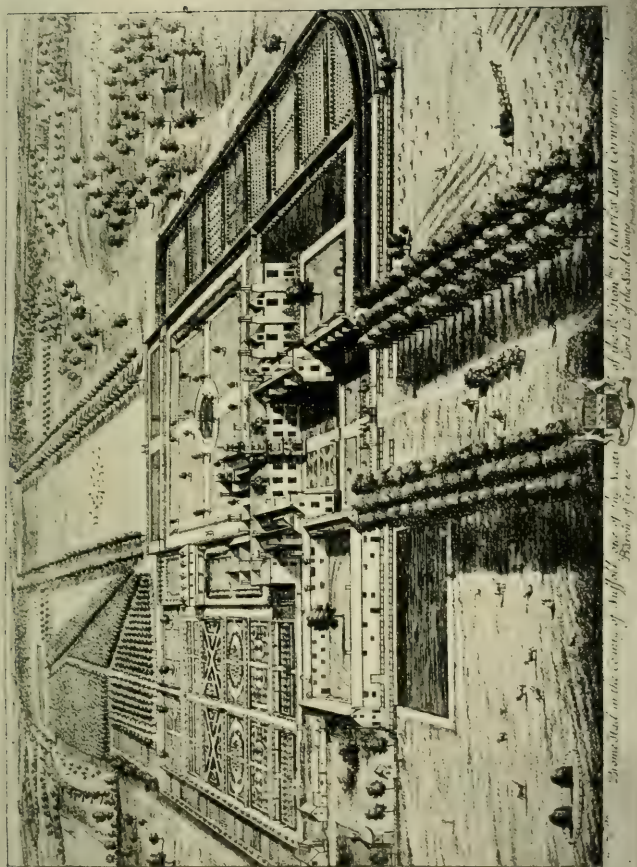
A solid brick building, the new Brome Hall contrasted strangely with the neighbouring half-timbered houses. At that time the timbering was usually of willow, and Harrison, an Elizabethan writer, and *laudator temporis acti*, railed against even the introduction of oak timber and of chimneys; he declared that the oaken men had become willow, and a great many altogether straw; that the smoke used to harden both the man and his house timbers, preserve the one from decay, the other from the hands of the quack.

"This rude kind of building," he says "made the Spaniards in Queen Mary's days to wonder, but chiefly when they saw that large diet was used in many of these so homely cottages. These English, quoth one of no small reputation amongst them, have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the King, whereby it appeareth that he liked better of our good fare in such coarse cabins, than of their own thin diet in their princely habitations and palaces."

The yeomanry and lesser gentry commonly slept on straw pallets with chaff bolsters, covered with coarse sheeting; their servants slept on straw with no covering at all.

The rushes on the floors, which Erasmus describes as serving only to hide the refuse and dirt of years, were, we need not doubt, occasionally removed, for Tusser, the East Anglian poet, exhorts the housewife to scatter wormwood seeds when the floors were swept, for an evidently necessary purpose:—

"Where chamber is sweeped and wormwood is strowne  
No flea for his life dare abide to be knowne."



BROME HALL IN THE XVII CENTURY



The sweating sickness, which too often devastated England, was asserted by Erasmus to originate in the incommodious houses, the sluttishness within doors, and the filthiness of the streets.

In wills of this period, bequests for reparation of roads and streets are of frequent occurrence. The highways of that time did indeed, "by reason of straitness and disrepair breed a loathsome weariness to the passenger." In the third year of Mary's reign, however, waywardens were established in every parish, to be chosen by the constables and churchwardens, and to report on the state of the roads to local justices. They had power to summon teams of horses or oxen from those parishioners who were then rich on fifty pounds a year, and to demand two labourers for six days' statute duty on roads from freeholders worth an annual forty shillings; with power to levy fines and settle compositions to be paid by those who wished to avoid personal labour. They saw also to the cutting of fences, and had altogether much the same duties as those of the modern road surveyor.

On the 17th November 1558, the misguided unhappy Queen "yielded her life to nature, and her Kingdom to Queen Elizabeth her sister." Her death was the occasion of heartfelt thanksgiving to persecuted Protestants; in Ipswich alone seventy-seven people sentenced to burn for their religion, were thereby reprieved; and the dungeons of Bury, Norwich, Eye, and other East Anglian towns disgorged their victims.

In one of her many rare old cabinets, the last of the Betts of Wortham kept a notable relic, symbolical of the joy of her ancestors at that great deliverance. It was a hand-made damask linen table-cloth. In the centre was

woven a large portrait of Queen Elizabeth, as she appeared at her accession, a close Tudor cap surrounding her girlish face, and it was bordered with patterns of pelicans and the royal arms, and the words "Qvene Elizabeth God save the Qvene." The flax for this cloth was perchance grown at Wortham and spun by Alys Bettes, to be afterwards woven, in the pattern described, by the linen weavers of Diss, who had been long famous for their skill. Its possession and use argues a greater amount of refinement for the family, than Harrison ascribes to the lesser gentry of their time, who, he says, ate their meals from wooden trenchers, and ladled their pottage into their mouths with wooden spoons.

Old Rycharde Bettes did not live long to enjoy the unwonted freedom for religious thought ; he died in 1559, the year following Elizabeth's accession.

In his will, which he executed in the last year of Queen Mary, we have his declaration of faith. He bequeaths his soul, not, as was customary, and practically obligatory in pre-reformation days, to "the saints and all the company of heaven," but "unto the hands of Almighty God my Creator and Redeemer besechyng hym of his Infinite Goodnesse to graunt me the fruition of his death."

Omission in a will of that date of the names of the Virgin Mary and other saints as legatees of the testator's soul, was regarded as the sign of a pestilent heretic ; it is indeed recorded that in the latter days of King Henry VIII. the body of a Mr Tracie was for this very offence actually dug up, and publicly burned by order of the Chancellor of Worcester.

Rycharde was fortunate, in that he died a year too late for such savage vengeance to be taken on his poor bones,



which still lie, as he wished, in "the sanctuary" of Wortham Church.

For Alys his wife, Rycharde provided liberally, leaving her all his lands, tenements, meadows, woods, free and copy in Wortham, Redgrave, Palgrave, Burgate, and Bressingham; which were to go after her death to his eldest son George, he paying his brothers, Thomas, John the elder, Hillary, and John the younger twelve pounds each. Twelve pounds was roughly speaking equivalent to £150 of our money. To Elizabeth his only daughter, her mother was to pay a like sum, half down and the rest on the day of her marriage.

Thomas the second son, was also given "two pictelles (pightles) at the Linge gappe, and the close lying at St John's." St John's refers to the chapel on the borders of Wortham and Palgrave, where the testator had been taught his letters by clerics from St Edmundsbury: the ruins of this chapel were still standing in the eighteenth century, when they were described by "honest Tom Martin," the antiquary of Palgrave. The name is now applied to a modern house, possibly on the same site.

The will, after providing for the descent of the land in the male line, or failing that, to his daughter's children, contains this clause, "No son or other inheritor of my lands to sell or exchange any of them to or with George Waller or any one for him, on pain of forfeiture of all bequests." This George Waller must have been a new-comer in Wortham, for his name does not appear in the Subsidy list of 1524. His wife Mary seems to have been related to Anthony Yaxley, the abjurer of Bilney's doctrines. Remains of the coat-of-arms of George and Mary Waller may still be seen in a window of Yaxley

Hall. Two sisters of Mary Yaxley married : the one John Lany of Cratfield, and the other Thomas Sherman of Yaxley, both of whose signatures are attached to a deed of bargain and sale among the Betts papers. From the Suffolk Shermans it is said that the well-known family of that name in America is descended.

We hear no more of the Betts-Waller feud. It may have originated in anything, from differences in religious opinions to petty squabbles between the shepherds of their respective flocks. In the case of neighbours whose lands march together, the Scotch proverb is too often sadly applicable : " Friends are like fiddle strings, they mauna be screwed too high."

John, to whom the old book of " Medicins " is attributed, is not mentioned in Rycharde Bettes' will, nor is his sister Alys, who possibly was dead ; Thomas and Water, his younger brothers, are both named. Old men they must have been, both well over seventy, when Rycharde passed to his rest.

Rycharde's three eldest sons, George, Thomas, and John, were grown men at the time of their father's death, the youngest of the three, John the elder, being just twenty-one. To him his father left a special gift " my grate brasse pot on the daye of his marriage." The youngest son, John the younger, was a boy of eleven when his father died, his brother Hillary twelve, and Elizabeth thirteen. Two brothers with the same Christian names, even when there were ten years between them, must, one would imagine, have caused many a real " Comedy of Errors."

The wills of the period show that it was common for our forefathers to name two children—who, it may be,

had been born on the same Saint's day—alike. And to make confusion worse confounded, no second Christian name was ever bestowed. The Church, it is true, allowed young people to change their baptismal names at confirmation, but the validity of the change in the eye of the law seems to have been doubtful.

## CHAPTER VI

1559-1589

THOMAS BETTES LICENSED TO "USE THE ARTE AND  
SCIENCE OF CHIRURGERY"—AN ELIZABETHAN LADY  
DOCTOR—A MANOR COURT

**A**LONE woman, whose whole wealth lay in her lands, and whose revenue depended on their proper management, might find her position difficult even in this, the second year of King George V.; how much more so the new-made widow of Rycharde Bettes in the rough trouble-stricken England of Queen Elizabeth's first regnal year!

The country was then but slowly recovering from the famine and sickness that in Queen Mary's reign "did sore molest the commons," when corn had grown so "skant that the plain poor people did make very much of acorns."

No wonder corn was "skant." Every year, less and less land came under the plough; and wool—its importance typified to this day by the Lord Chancellor's woolsack—was at once the riches and the curse of the country. A land "glad with corn-fields" no longer rejoiced the farmer's heart; his ideal was now "hills white over with sheep"; and the strong hands which

"Coude eke sowe and hold a plowe,  
Both dyke and hedge and milke a cowe,"

had to be put to more deft exercise, helping to make bayes, sayes, arras and mockades at Norwich, under the tuition of the Dutch refugee weavers.

It is hard to realize, in these days when government securities and numberless private enterprises offer a safe return, that the England of three centuries ago knew no such easy channels for investments. A man's income then came from land, flocks, and herds; or, were he a town dweller, from the practice of his profession or merchandise. Younger sons of country gentlemen, as a matter of course looked to trade for means of livelihood. John Bettes the younger was an example of this; in mature life we find him settled in the little Norfolk town of Watton, where he accumulated a fortune by trading in tallow, another product of the ubiquitous sheep.

The short reign of Mary, though of infamous memory, yet may fairly be said to have done more for England, than England then knew. The gold which Spanish Philip scattered, drawn from the newly discovered Indies, and the romantic tales told by the adventurous voyagers of Spain, opened to English eyes visions of wealth and fame in a new world beyond the sea. The neighbourhood of Wortham can boast of one "venterous gentleman"—Francis Pretty of Eye, who in 1586 sailed with Master Thomas Candish of Trimley in Suffolk "round about the circumference of the whole earth." Richard Hakluyt, later rector of Wetheringsett, a village not many miles from Wortham, published Pretty's account of his amazing adventures; and with the Betts muniments is a deed of 1542 which reminds us of him, bearing as it does the signature of one Thomas Pretty



of Eye, who was certainly a relative, most probably his father.

Of the sons of Dame Alys Bettes, only George the eldest remained at home with his mother, to manage for her the Wortham estate, with the help and advice of Master John Thurston, a neighbouring landowner at Hoxne, "the supervisor" of his father's will. John the younger was settled, as we have seen, at Watton, and Thomas soon after his father's death had gone to Norwich, to try his fortune as a doctor, no doubt equipped for practice with his uncle's book of "Medicins."

In 1561, we find this document—a licence to Thomas Bettes to practise "chirurgery"—

"John by the Sufferannce of God Bisshop of Norwich to all the fayethfull flocke of Christ sendeth greating Whereas by the credible Reporte of dyuers Wourshipfull and honest men of the Towne of Norwich one Thomas Bets hathe ben comended unto us for a perfight skilfull & Practized man in the Science of Chirurgery, of whiche there commendacon as there certificate doethe testifie, the difficulte cuer of dyuers pacyentes hath ben the cause, withoute any favor or affection, There for knowinge howe necessarye a membre a practized Chirurgion is to the common welthe, knowe ye that I the sayed Bishop Do authorize & Licence the sayd Thomas Betts to Vse Practize & ffollowe the sayd Arte & Science of Chirurgery as well w<sup>th</sup> in the sayd Cittie of Nor<sup>wch</sup> & the lyberties of the same as elles where within o<sup>r</sup> holle dioses of Norffolk & Suffolk Charging hym neuertheless so to vse the same his Vocacon as yt maye growe to the glory of God and bodelye health of the Quenes Matiēs lovinge subjects. In Wytness hereof we haue caused o<sup>r</sup> seale to be

putt Thies psentes yoven the XX Daye of March in the yere of o<sup>r</sup> lord God one thousand fiue hundreth threscore and one and of o<sup>r</sup> consecration the second yere."

The Norwich records show that women were also licensed to practise medicine in that city, though they could not be members of the company of physicians and barber surgeons.

What a contrast between the highly qualified medical woman of the twentieth century, and the lady doctor licensed to practise "chirurgery" by a sixteenth-century bishop. The one clad in severely cut coat and skirt visiting her patients in an electric brougham, the latest science at her finger tips; the other "going sprucely in ruff and farthingale," padding along the foul streets on tall chopines, her faith fixed firm in the doctrine of signatures, and in the efficacy of precious metals, loathly reptiles and fibres of the hangman's rope, as remedies for all the ills that flesh is heir to.

In 1568, another subsidy was collected in Wortham. The commissioners were Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Sir Charles Cornwaleys of Brome, Nicholas Cutler, and John Thruston or Thurston of Hoxne, who, as we have seen, was a friend of the Bettes family. We find among the names returned for Wortham Alys Bettes widow and her son George. The rectors of Wortham appear then to have been John Ferrer and Radulphus Jones; but as clergy were not liable for glebe lands their names are absent from the return.

Roger Erle, however, curate perhaps of one of the medieties, or parish clerk, for parish clerks were often in

holy orders, was taxed for £1 in land. Amye Erle, who seems to have won the heart of Doctor Thomas Bettes, was either a sister or daughter of his.

At the time the subsidy was taken, George was still the only son of Alys Bettes living at home ; but not long after, either for lack of patients, or for the sake of the bright eyes of Amye Erle, Thomas returned to Wortham, and soon afterwards, in 1571, we find him there in mortal sickness making his last will and testament.

This document shows that he was then farming the lands left to him by his father ; for his sheep and cattle he leaves equally between his mother and Amye Erle, with the exception of two calves to his sister Elizabeth. His lands he devised to his brother Harrye (Hillary) ; and to John the younger of Watton he left his black ambling mare.

Ambling was "an accomplishment peculiar," says Harrison, "to horses of our soyle, a well proportioned pase not hurtful to the rider, yeilding comfortable sound as he travelleth by the waie." Another writer recommends horsemen, riding steeds which could not amble, to carry a stick of alder in their pocket, so that "his breech should nein be galled or wearied although he rode on trotting horse."

Amye Erle, Doctor Thomas Bettes' sole executrix, did not long remain inconsolable. The Wortham registers testify to her marriage, early in 1572, to one Thomas Sheppard, only a few months after the poor doctor's death.

In the same year, 1572, died the widow Alys Bettes. The freehold estate and some of the copyholds passed to George her eldest son according to his father's will, but it was not till 1578 that he was admitted

to the copyhold lands held of the manor of Wortham Hall.

This manor was now in possession of the Feltons of Playford in Suffolk, through the marriage of the lady thereof, Margaret Sampson, with the head of that family.

The court at which George Betts was admitted in 1578 is described in his copy of Court Roll, which was among the Wortham muniments, as "the first court of Mistress Mary Felton widow, and Robt. Sampson armiger executors of the last will & testament of Thos. Felton armiger."

In the spacious days of good Queen Bess, no event even in ordinary life was allowed to pass without its proper accompaniment of pomp and circumstance. The Tudor sovereigns were accustomed to be addressed by their greatest subjects kneeling; and even in Her Majesty's absence, Queen Elizabeth's dinner-table was, so the German traveller Hentzner relates, thus saluted thrice before the cloth was laid.

We cannot therefore be far wrong in surmising that none of the ancient ceremonies proper to a manorial court would be omitted at this first court of a new lord and lady. The court was probably held in the ancient house still known as Wortham Old Hall, and the lady of the manor would be present. Imagine her seated on a high-backed carven chair, her enormous white starched ruff showing up the close black velvet hood then worn by widows, the long-waisted bodice, worn over the stiff stays of the period, ending in a point, reaching half-way to the knees, which together with the huge hooped skirt would give her the appearance of standing.

By her side would be seated her kinsman and co-executor Robert Sampson, accommodated most likely



with an oval buffet stool, to allow for the spread of the fashionable trunks, which as then worn were so voluminous as to necessitate an alteration in the seats of peers and commoners in their Houses of Parliament. The bright colour of his pointed stuffed satin doublet and the ribbon points of his slashed sleeves would contrast with the sable of his companion's dress and the smoke-darkened walls and rafters of the unceiled hall. With his small feathered cap in his hand, he would courteously return the salutations of "the natural tenants" of the manor as they came in one by one—the humble clown come to do homage for his few roods, as well as gentlemen in the position of George Bettes, owner of many copyholds in many manors.

After the first proclamation made "for any to come and take out of the hands of the lady of the manor of Wortham, lands late in the occupation of Alys Bettes, cometh George Bettes and prayeth to be admitted." The loud voiced crier recited the descriptions and boundaries of the various lands to which he was entitled, and "seizin by the rod" was then delivered to him. It was not till 1610 that land was freed from feudal customs, so it is probable that George had to kneel in compliance with ancient usage, and placing his joined hands between the lady's hands, profess that he did become her man from that day forth, of life and limb and earthly honour, receiving in return a kiss from the fair lips of Mistress Mary Felton.

George Bettes had married before his mother's death, his wife's name being Agnes or Anneys Mans, of what parish is not known, for the marriage is not registered in Wortham.



In 1578, when the court was held, he was father of two children, Richard born in 1573, and a daughter with the quaint name of Syeth.

With a growing family to provide for, George must have welcomed the rise in rent, and the greater agricultural prosperity, which was being brought about by increased knowledge and better farming. Land let in 1574 at one shilling and threepence an acre had in 1577 risen to one shilling and sixpence, and by 1589 reached five shillings the acre; and landlords could also exact considerable fines upon granting and renewing leases.

Tusser complains :—

“ Great fines so neare did pare me,  
Great rent so much did skare me,  
Though country health long staid me,  
Yet lease expiring fraid me.”

Though, we are told by a contemporary writer “ there be much more ground eared (ploughed) now than hath been of late years,” the price of wheat reached sixteen shillings a quarter—at the lowest computation £4, 16s. of our money.

At such prices for wheat, “ the poure labouring man,” whose wages were a fixed quantity under order of the justices, had to content himself with beans, peas, and oats. A ploughman then was paid one shilling (equivalent to 6s.) a week with his food provided, the cost of a man’s food being about eightpence (4s.) a week.

Exportation laws were framed to keep wheat from famine prices. In 1553 export of wheat was forbidden when the price in England per quarter exceeded 6s. 8d. (equivalent to 40s.). In 1568, the price limit had to be

raised to ten shillings (6os.), and in 1593 to twenty shillings (£6) the quarter.

Yet in Suffolk the price of corn rose to such a height that in 1589 Sir George Colt, High Sheriff, transmitted to Parliament a petition from the hundreds of Hoxne, and Hartismere to which Wortham belonged, imploring help to stay the dearth of corn.

The certificates he enclosed—showing the prices that obtained in the two hundreds, were signed by Sir Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave, son of the Lord Keeper, Bassingbourne Gawdy, and John Thurston of Hoxne, three of Her Majesty's justices of the peace.

## CHAPTER VII

1559-1602

“THE QUEENE’S MAJESTIE” IN SUFFOLK—THE  
ARMADA SCARE

**I**N the history of the Bettes of Wortham such striking events as the two visits of the great Queen Elizabeth to Redgrave must find a place.

The manor of Wortham Abbots had, it may be remembered, been granted to Sir Nicholas Bacon at the dissolution of the Abbey of St Edmundsbury, and on the site of what is now the fine mansion of Redgrave Hall, stood at that time Abbot Samson’s stone built villa.

This house, then the residence of the newly created Lord Keeper, was visited by the Queen in 1559; and while there, she granted a charter to her Borough of Eye—the charter “given at Redgrave”—which conferred on that town the privilege of sending two members to Parliament and is still preserved among the town archives.

As the death of Rycharde Bettes had taken place only two months before the Queen’s visit, it is unlikely that his bereaved family would have joined in the festivities; but in 1578 they were to have another opportunity.

On this second occasion, the Sheriff of Suffolk Sir Thomas Spring, had short notice of the Queen’s coming; but notwithstanding, he was able to receive Her Majesty in considerable state, being accompanied by “two

hundred young gentlemen cladde all in white velvet, and three hundred of the graver sorte apparelled in blacke velvet and faire chaynes, with fifteen hundred serving men on horseback, well and bravely mounted." With this noble body-guard the Queen progressed through Suffolk on her way to Norwich, where "a shew of some strange device" was daily set forth to divert the maiden monarch.

It is most likely that it was on her return through Suffolk that the Queen knighted "Mayster Nicholas Bacon," eldest son of the Lord Keeper, at Redgrave, and visited the house of "Maister Revet, where all things were well, and in very good order and meate liberally spent." Probably this was Thomas Revett, Esq., of Brockford House, one of Her Majesty's justices of the peace, who afterwards contributed handsomely to the Armada fund, and who was descended from the same family as the William Revet whose name has already appeared in these pages.<sup>1</sup>

We may be sure that the Bettés family were among the throng who eagerly watched the dazzling pageant on its stately progress through Wortham to Redgrave, and from Redgrave to Brockford some seven miles distant. In it rode gallants in the rich costume of the day, their yard-long rapiers clattering against the gay trappings of their prancing steeds, and vying with each other as to the size of their dazzling white ruffs; following them, a host of handsomely clad mounted serving men, the silver badges of their various masters on their arms. Then

<sup>1</sup> This looks more likely than that the Queen should have made (as suggested in the notes to Churchyarde) a longer deviation from her route to the house of James Revett of Rattlesden a cousin of Thomas.

the central figure of the procession, the Majesty of England, decked in the gorgeous raiment she loved sparkling with jewels, with her bevy of fair ladies all in brave attire; the coaches in which they were seated "putting both man and horse into amazement by their monstrous strangeness."

Taylor, the water poet, one of "Gloriana's" loving subjects, describes Her Majesty's coach, generally drawn by six grey horses with tails and manes dyed bright orange, as a gaily decorated canopied vehicle surmounted by a huge bunch of plumes. It was, he strangely says, reputed by some to be a giant crab shell brought out of China, while others thought it one of the Pagan temples in which cannibals adored the devil!

Whether provisions for the Queen and her vast train were provided entirely by those whom she delighted to honour, or whether they were in part supplied by the royal purveyors, is an open question. Francis Bacon, younger son of Elizabeth's host at Redgrave, made a notable speech in Parliament some years later, pointing out the evils of the purveying system. "No one knew," he said, "when he might not be visited with the unwelcome presence of these taxers instead of takers, or by whom he was despoiled, since they refused to exhibit their authority."

Miss Strickland tells a story of a farmer who, seeking redress from such unlawful exactions, placed himself in the Queen's way as she was taking her morning walk, crying out: "Which is the Queen?" "I am your Queen," answered Elizabeth graciously, "what would'st thou have with me?" "You!" cried the farmer, feigning amazement, "why you are one of the rarest women



I ever saw ; you can eat no more than our Madge, who is thought the properest lass in the parish, though short of you ; but that Queen Elizabeth I look for, devours so many of my ducks and capons that I am not able to live."

" Suffolk," says Reyce, " groaned under the remedyless burden " ; its annual contribution to the royal household, in ordinary times, being valued at £3616 of our present money.

In 1579, the parish registers of Diss record no less than fifty-six deaths from " the plag." This visitation is by the Court chronicler of the Queen's progress attributed to " the traines of Her Majesty's carriages being many of them infected with the plague ! "

Nine years later, when, on the approach of the great Armada, the

" Daughter of ancient kings ;  
Man-souled Eliza,"

called on all " to consider the arrogant threatenings now burst out in action on the seas," the neighbourhood of Wortham responded even more freely than the rest of Suffolk. Although George Bettes' name does not appear in the list of money contributions, it is proved from his wife's will that he furnished himself with arms and armour to enable him to take his place among the five hundred " choice men, disciplined & singularly furnished," with whom Sir Nicholas Bacon marched by commandment unto the camp at Tilbury.

All men between sixteen and sixty put themselves under arms. Even the clergy were not exempt, but were charged according to their livings ; and both on foot and on horseback, were mustered and trained by captains appointed by their Diocesan, " until experience teaching,

made them require to be inserted into the trained bands of the layiety." John Parsley was at this time rector of Wortham, but he was exempt from training on account of age, as it appears by a parish document of five years later that he had then been rector of Wortham for forty-six years.

This document, a yellow parchment roll drawn up and signed by "the annycient inhabitants" of Wortham in Parsley's time, was preserved by the Betts family until 1905.

"26th March 1592—A special note & remembrance of such Tenths & Tythes as ar Usualye payable to the parsons ther (of Wortham), & the course and forme howe they ought to be payed accordinge and by the annycient customes ther tyme out of mynd of man. Used collected by us whose names are Underwritten, aswell of our owne knowledges, as of dyvers our predecessors and other annycient Inhabitants in the same Towne.

Corn 1 Imp<sup>r</sup>mis, ther hath bene payid the the tenth sheffe of all kynd of Corne growing in the same towne rydye bound, in respect of the whole corne and reasonable rakeings and alredye left out upon the ground where it groweth, and for peace and tares the tenth stetch ryddye werked.

hey 2 Itm : ther hath byn likewise payd allwaise the tenth cocke of hey of all the hay growing in the same towne, mowne and sett out at the first cocking thereof, in respect of the hay & rawinge <sup>1</sup> of the same growing.

hemp 3 Item : likewise ther hath bene paid allwaise the tenth sheffe of hempe, rydye retted, dryed, bound up and made ryddye, and ye same brought rydye to churche.

<sup>1</sup> "Rawinge" means the second crop of grass after taking the first crop of hay. The word Rowen is still used in Suffolk.

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- fruit 4      Item : likewyse ther hath bene payded the tenth of apples and pears, and the same likewyse brought to church.
- bees 5      Itm : ther is likewyse payable for each Skeppe of bees dryven one pennye.
- Eggs 6      Itm : ther ar likewyse payable on Maundy thursday ye tenth of all those Egges w<sup>ch</sup> were gathered all that lent, aswell for chyckins as ducklinge, and that the parson hath used to fetch the same egges.
- Geese 7      Itm : ther hath bene payed the tenth of such yonge geese as ar bred in the same towne ; and if ther be under seaven then we use to paye no tythe gosse, but for everye gosse one farthinge ; and if ther be seaven, then we use to pay a tyth gosse, and the Parson do allowe for everye gosse lacking of Tenne, one farthinge, and tyth gese brought rydye to church.
- lambe 8  
pigge      Itm : we use to paye the tyth lambe and pigg bred in the same towne, and if ther be seaven or aboue we paye one tyth lambe or pigge, & then the parson allowe one halfe pennye for everye lambe or pigge wanting of tenne ; and if but sixe or under, then we are to allowe to them for everye lambe or pigge under seaven one halfpennye, and the same to be brought to the church. And we use to paye the tyth wolle by the weight & bringe it to church.
- Milch 8  
neat 9      Itm : we use to paye for everye mylch cowe kept in the same towne and hyr calfe two pence, and use to paye no tyth lactage calfe nor chese, and for everye cowe goinge farrowe 1<sup>d</sup>. ob,<sup>1</sup> and for everye cowe and hyr calfe for the yeare in which she hath her

<sup>1</sup> A penny and a halfpenny. Oboli and quadrantes were used for halfpennies and farthings up to the early years of the eighteenth century. The Rev. G. Conybeare, in "Highways and Byways in Cambridge and Ely," tells us that for 100 minutes work, a villain was paid  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. He derives our word "job" from *opus*, work ; *i opus*, (one work), written j op ; but I think *obolus* a more likely derivation than *opus*, one *obolus* (worth of work), j ob.

first calfe one penny and one halfe penny, for every drye neat beaste above a yeare olde one penny, and for everye fole fallinge one penny.

Wood 10 Itm : we have allwayes used to pay tyth wood of all such growne in the same towne which are whollye planted or used with wood and not otherwise.

Offering 11 Itm : everye person of the age of xiiij yeares & upward of the same parish is to pay thir offerings, viz : ij<sup>d</sup>. at the usual feasts in the yeare, viz the byrth of our lord, the feast of Easter, the Nativitie of St. John the baptist, and St. Michael the arch angell, by even portions viz a halfepenny at everye feast aforesaid.

Marredge Itm : we pay for every person marryed ther sixpence  
burial Itm : we pay for every person buried there fower pence

churchings Itm : we pay for every woman churched sixpence

Mortuary <sup>1</sup> Itm : we haue used to pay a mortuary  
Willm Corbold for xxxix yeares remembreth  
George Bettes for ffyfty yeares  
James Thurlow for ffytye yeares  
Henry Battely for ffyfty yeares  
John Benton for ffyfty yeares  
Robt. Hasell for ffyfty yeares  
John Scase for fortye yeares  
John Kyrke for fortye yeares  
John Benton Jun. for forty yeares  
Watter Battely for forty yeares  
Test. Edw. Coppledycke

Robt. Archer

Robt. debenham

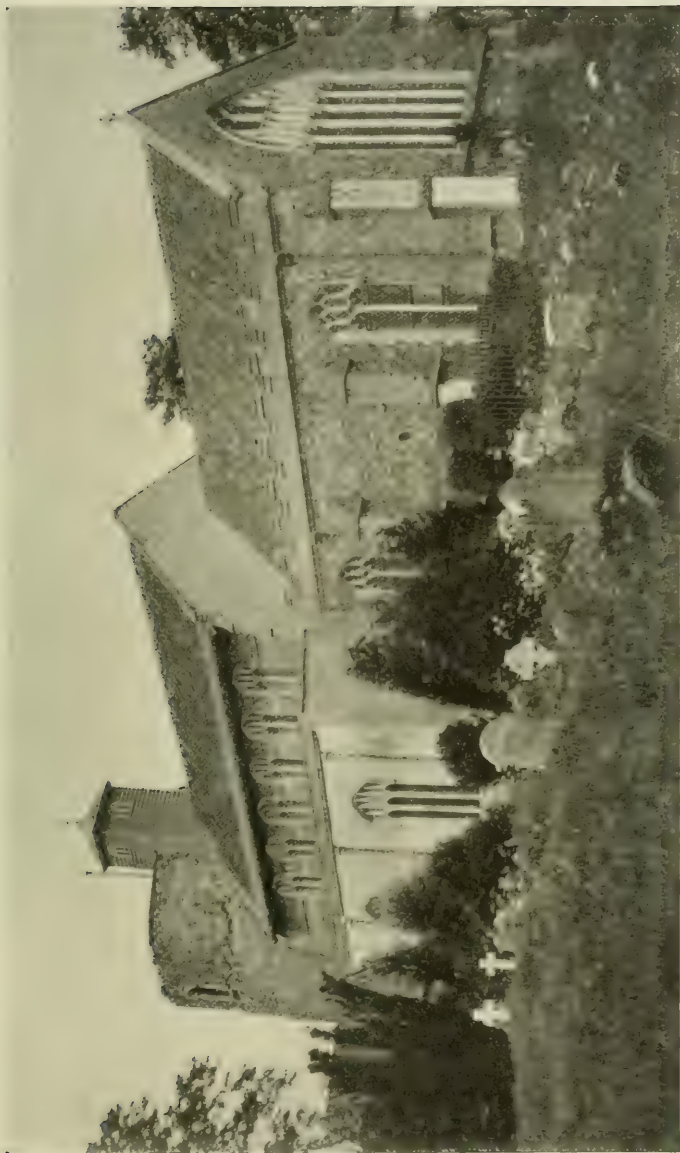
By me John Parsley, parson of Wortham Whose continuance hathe bene there fortie yeares and sixe  
And do confirme the aboue written customs to be true.  
Test. Henry Chittocke."

<sup>1</sup> Mortuaries, or corse presents, were only due by custom, not by law.

The Archdeacon of Sudbury visited Wortham in 1602, and his report thus describes "Wortham Church, a p'sonage presentative Sir John Parsley person thereof, that is to say of one moietie. The chancell over the North syde verie ruinous, through his defaulte, who sold away the Leade and covered it with boardes it hathe been so this xv yeares, and besides the Stone worke for wante of the Leade decayed thare through the defaulte of the Churchwardens and parishioners."

Fifteen years previously, just before King Philip's invincible Armada started to conquer England, Elizabeth's proclamation had warned the country against "these great preparations . . . tending to a conquest wherein every man's particular state is to be touched." That being so, may we not hope that Sir John Parsley had stripped his chancel for patriotic reasons and sold the lead not for his private gain, but to provide balls to be fired from the muskets of the trained bands?





WORTHAM CHURCH

THE ROUND TOWER IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE LARGEST IN ENGLAND



## CHAPTER VIII

1599-1609

ELIZABETHAN FARMING—"RESAITS FOR HORS DRINCKS"  
—"MEASURES OF BLOWING"

**G**EORGE BETTES died six years after adding his name to the testimony of the other "annycient inhabitants" of Wortham. On June 7th 1599, he slept with his fathers, and for the second time a widowed Mistress Bettes was left alone to guide the family fortunes. Her husband's will provided that for ten years she was to hold possession of all messuages, lands, etc., in Wortham, Redgrave, Palgrave, Brissingham, and Fersfield in Norfolk and Suffolk; after that to take only her dower of one-third. During the ten years, she was to pay portions of £100 (£600) each to Syeth, Bridgit, and Maryona, her daughters. After the expiration of the ten years Richard was to have the estate, and George and John specified parcels of land, subject to their mother's dower. The testator appears to have somewhat distrusted Richard, his eldest son, then a young man of twenty-six, for he makes elaborate provisions to prevent him from depriving his brothers of their younger sons' portions; and it was for this reason probably that he left his wife in charge for ten years, his three younger children being under age—George nineteen, Maryona seventeen, and John a boy of thirteen.

That same year of her father's death, Bridgit, the second daughter, married Thomas Herne of Burston, a village about five miles off, across the Norfolk border.

From the records that are left to us, it would seem as though Richard was much away from home, and whatever the reason, his younger brother George managed the family affairs.

On a fly-leaf in the old copy book, already described, is the following entry in the clear flourishing handwriting of the day :—

“ Itm on the xvj<sup>th</sup> day of October A<sup>o</sup> dno 1603, I George Betts did pute xvij<sup>h</sup> swine of Thomas Denton's in the pounce In the presence of William Bately and Richard Bately.”

This is the earliest occurrence of the name of Betts being spelt without the penultimate letter e. In a similar entry, however, on the same page, and dated the same year, he signs his name as George Bettes, and his signature is witnessed by his aunt, “ Elizabeth Bettes ” ; possibly she, belonging to a former generation, objected to his abbreviation of the family name.

Thomas Denton, the owner of the twenty-eight swine, would hardly grudge the fine payable to the lord of the manor for redemption of “ waifts & estrayes,” for if they had gone farther afield, and fallen into the hands of a thief, recovery would have been difficult.

Among the Wortham papers is the following “ Forme of Hue & Crye,” dated 1605, which was then the one and only method of regaining stolen goods :—

“ These are to Will & require yō and ye<sup>t</sup> in his Mat<sup>s</sup>. name straight lye to Charge and comande yō and ewye of yō to whom it may apptayne, that forth w<sup>th</sup>. Upon

the receipt hereof yō make delygent search w<sup>th</sup> in ewye yo<sup>r</sup> sewal towne shippes, after one S.B. : late of C : in the p<sup>te</sup> and Countye aforsde labor<sup>re</sup> being a man of a middle stature, and about xlyte (sic) yeares oulde, whose hare is browne whose appell is a gray freese Jerkin, a white fustian dublitt, a paire of Russet briches, a pair of grene stockin and a black hatt, who is lately deputed from C. in the pte, aforesaide and lately stolen from thence a proper graye geldinge wch. cann both amble and trot wth. a flesh brande one his neare shoulder like unto this  $\Pi$ , he hath a little pece cutt offe of his farre eare, and is shodd of all foure feete, If by yo<sup>r</sup> diligent search any such be founde, Lett the fellow and hors be stayed, and word brought to C. aforesaide, in the p<sup>te</sup> & County aforesaide, and the ptys that bringe worde shallbe well satisfied for their paynes here-of faile ye not as you and ewye of yo<sup>rs</sup> will answere the Contrarye at yo<sup>r</sup> uttermost p'ells, given the vijth. day of July in the third yeare of his Ma<sup>ty</sup> Raigne of England France and Ireland and of Scotland the XXXIXth. To the constables of A.R.C. so from thence to Q. and soe forward Eastward speedylie to be Conveyed."

With the MSS. at Wortham was also the proclamation of the Commissioners for levying and collecting payment of the second subsidy granted to King James "by the laietie" in the first year of his reign. In the returns for Wortham, Anneys Bettes and her brother-in-law John Bettes of Watton are the only members of the family mentioned.

Anneys Bettes died in 1606, before the ten years of her occupancy of the estate had expired. She left a will disposing of her household stuff and stock on the home farm.



The bequest of her "horse-beasts," cows, calves, farm implements, and her "horse myll with all the goinge giere" to her son George, shows that it was he, and not his elder brother Richard, who was expected to carry on the farm, and manage the estate as he ultimately did.

Horse mills were in general use in large households, by those "at liberty to grind at home"; the "common mille," owned by the lord of the manor, to which tenants were sometimes compelled to come, being often "farre off, and the way foul."

Another significant bequest to George is six table turned posts and three table planks, used evidently to form the trestle table in the "great hall," long enough to seat at one common meal the master and his family above the salt, the house servants and farm labourers below. According to contemporary accounts such table planks cost as much as two pounds each of the then money, a large sum, and no doubt the turned posts on which they were laid were proportionately expensive.

A long list of "household stuff" is also left to George, including "the bed on which he lieth, two pair of fine sheets, two good pillow beres," and ending with "my second brasse pot."

"Pillow beres" were made, not of linen, but of cloth often richly embroidered, to lay over the pillow; thus in Chaucer's "Boke of the Duchesse," we read: "and many a pilow, and every bere of clothe of Reynes to slepe softe."

John, then nineteen, the youngest of the family, had with his share four "milch neat," with the curious names of "littell Clarke, Godword, Jelyfer, and Leuse," and the bed complete in the parlour.

It was then customary to have beds in sitting-rooms ; in an inventory taken three years before, of the great house of Sir John Rous, at Henham, " three joyned bedsteads " are mentioned as among the furniture of his parlour. The custom still lingers in farmhouses and cottages in other parts of the country, though in Suffolk it has completely died out.

John was also left " a great chair " in the parlour ; one, very likely, of the pair of very ancient chairs which remained in the house till the sale of 1906 ; the other was bequeathed to the eldest son, Richard. The two chairs sold had backs carved with foliage under an arch, with strap work above, and were described in Messrs Christie's catalogue as " early seventeenth century."

" The cubberd now standing in my parlor," which was left to Richard by his mother, was sold at the same time for £100, 16s. It stood, up to the time of the sale, in the hall at Wortham, a six foot high court cupboard, of solid oak, carved with foliage and fluting, with baluster supports at the side, the panels inlaid with groups of flowers and foliage with borders of chequer pattern.

Syeth and Maryona, the unmarried daughters, were appointed executors ; and to them were bequeathed beds, sheets, buffet stools, tables, and other household furniture, as well as many cattle and sheep.

Neat stock formed also part of the share which fell to Brigit Herne, the married daughter, and " the lyverie bed complete." In other wills of the same date frequent mention is made of " lyverie " beds, tables, and chairs.

Anneys Betts remembered each of her daughter's children in her will, Anne, Nicholas, and Margaret ; and to their

father she left a " muskett, head piece, flask, and touch-box, and one little birding piece." The "muskett and head-piece," had been bought no doubt by George Betts during the Armada scare, when each landowner was compelled by law to provide himself with arms. " Birding pieces " were still scarce. Cross-bows remained in general use for long after, as witness the grievous mishap of Archbishop Abbott in 1622, whose arrow while he was shooting at a deer with a cross-bow, pierced instead the heart of an unfortunate gamekeeper; the hospital in Guildford High Street, founded by the remorseful prelate, still commemorates that fateful hunt.

Among the family papers are directions of about the date (judging by the handwriting) of this accident, for making the string of a cross-bow of " rawe thread."

Anneys Betts' long will concludes with substantial bequests to John and Margaret Awgar, her nephew and niece, and to each of her servants.

Richard Betts, the eldest son of Anneys, was evidently not at home in June 1606, when his mother made her will; though it would seem as if she expected him back before harvest, for she left him all " my corne now growing "; but harvest passed and still Richard never came.

The copyhold lands on which he should have entered after his mother's death, remained unclaimed until the manor court of April 1608; and after three fruitless proclamations, the bailiff was about to seize them for the use of Sir Anthony Felton, the lord; when George Betts appeared, and undertook to hold the lands for the few months remaining of the ten years of his mother's occupancy, during which his sisters' legacies were to be



*Fowling.*





paid. Maryona's legacy from her father was still short by twenty pounds.

There was found in the Wortham library a copy of Gervase Markham's "English Husbandman" published in 1613, scored with notes in the handwriting of this George Betts. He was evidently a careful man, like the franklin described by Sir Thomas Overbury, who "says not to his servants go to the field, but let us go; and with his own eye doth both fatten the flock and set forward all manner of husbandry."

The passages underscored in George Betts' well-worn book are quaint to our ideas. What would a gentleman farmer of to-day, whose wheat is drilled in faultless rows by a beautiful and efficient machine, say to George's method of setting corn according to these directions:—

"You shall take a board of sixe foot square which shalbe bored full of large wimble holes, each hole standing in good order iust sixe inches one from another, then laying the board upon the new digged ground, you shall with a sticke, made for the purpose, through every hole in the board, make a hole into the ground, at least fore inches deepe, and then into every such hole you shall drop a Corne of Wheate, and so remouing the board from place to place, goe all over the ground that you have digged, and so set each seuerall Corne sixe inchs one from another, and then with a rake you shall rake ouer and couer all the holes with earth in such sort that they may not be discerned."

Against these directions, George has written "a crop of set corne is 12 times better than a crop sowed confusedly."

Turning the pages of George Betts' book we find some

curious prognostications in which he probably placed firm faith :—The following were signs of a bad year.

“ If the oake apple breed instead of a fly, a spyder : if Comets or Meteors oppresse the Ayre : if the Sunne has his whole body or at least three parts eclipsed ” ; any of these were most certain signs that “ the yeare will prove barraine and fruitless ” ; but if Christmas Day should fall on a Sunday, it was an infallible sign “ that the yeere shall be good, seasonable, and abounding with all store and plenty.”

On New Year's Day, he could, if he would, learn if corn was to be cheap or dear, by this simple method : “ Take twelue principall graynes of Wheate out of the strength of the eare, and when the harth of your Chimney is most hot, sweepe it cleane, then make a stranger lay one of those Graynes on the hot hearth, then mark it well, and if it leape a little, Corne shall be reasonably cheape, but if it leape much then Corne shall be exceeding cheape, if it lye still and moue not, then the price of Corne shall stand, and continue still for that moneth ; and thus you shall use your twelue Graynes, the first day of every moneth one after another, and you shall know the rising and falling of Corne in every moneth, all the yeere following.”

With what breathless interest would George and his younger brother and sisters gathered round the open hearth in the “ great hall,” watch the result of this divination ; it was no child's play with them ; the signification of signs and Friday dreams were then articles of belief to all, from the King downwards.

Methodically painstaking in all relations of life, George Betts collected from many sources thirty-two recipes for

"Hors Drincks." Among the authorities, whose names he rarely failed to transcribe, are: "Doctor Bealles, John Doutes, owlde Roues, and goodman Mosses," whose "Resait" hereunder given is enough to make the stoutest "hors beast" quail:—

"2: ounces of veenes turptin and: 6: or eight Gray snailles Beete them with aspuonfull of sope and a littel chack (?) beeten all to gether with the whit of anegg all together."

George no doubt found the newly introduced tobacco both enjoyable and soothing. Physicians had hailed it as the long sought panacea for the aches and pains of poor humanity, and in vain had King James reviled it, as being "like hell in the very substance of it, for it is a stinking loathsome thing & so is hell." His Majesty's stiff-necked subjects still continued to smoke their long pipes over tankards of home brewed, and not only so, but actually gave it by way of medicine to their horses. Here is a "Resait" for a sick horse. "Blow a pipe of tobacco into his throat, halfe an hour after give this drinck following: boyle a quart of newe beere the spirgings (sic) of the vessells is best, and boyle in it 3 quarters of an ounce of senna, halfe a pinte of new goose dung, an ounce of alloe, a handfull of rues" Ashes of tobacco, so said the sages, had virtue to cure a "hors beast" even of glanders.

The authorities for the two following are not given.

"After a Hors be hard riden and much hotte "Take: 3: ounces of dieslaselen and giue it att. 3: seuerall mornings in a pint of stronge bere or sacke, and giue him: 3: ouers after, a Littel white watter and ride him."

"ffor a Tread of a Horse ffote Take a handfull of

Nettel-cropes and a handfull of Salt and a quantey of snailes and beate them together and apley them to ye Tread ; and draue it well : Then take Turpetin and Tare and white pich and a littel Rosen and Deers suet melt them together and aplic it very hot to ye place."

George Betts may have procured the deer suet necessary for the last prescription from venison out of the deer park at Redgrave, of his own hunting. We find these "measures of blowing" written out in his marked handwriting at the end of the "resaits for Hors Drincks."





## CHAPTER IX

1609-1636

THE REV. ELNATHAN PARR, B.D.—THE WORTHAM HOUSE-  
HOLD-BOOK—SALE OF A SWAN-MARK

**I**N 1609, Richard Betts died ; and two inquisitions were considered necessary, the first held at Eye two years after his death, before John Forrest, Esq. the King's escheator. On this occasion, "Robert Cheeke gent, Thomas Bysshop and others, said on their oaths that the said Richard Betts, on the day he died, was seized of a messuage in Wortham and 100 acres of land pasture and marsh adjacent to the said messuage, and of a close called Hedge close containing six acres, and of a close called the Woonges containing 8 acres and 3 roods at the Mill hill in Wortham, and of lands at the millgapp, and in the field called Waterfall held of Sir Harbottle Grimstone knt of his manor of Rishangles ; and that being so seized, he died on 1st Sept<sup>r</sup> in the 7th year of the present King's reign. The Jurors further said that John son and next heir of the said Richard Betts was at the time of Richard's death aged three years or thereabouts."

At the next inquisition taken a year later at Ipswich, the jurors gave particulars concerning other lands Richard Betts had held, some of Sir Nicholas Bacon Bart as of his Manor of Abbotts in Co. Suffolk, and some

of Sir Anthony Felton as of his manor of Wortham Hall, and of marsh lands held of the manor of Bressingham in Co. Norfolk, and of the manor of Fersfeilde. It was noted that Susanna Betts the relict of the said Richard Betts took the rents and issues of the said premises.

Beyond the bare Christian names of his widow and little son, nothing is known of Richard Betts' family life. His widow was represented by her attorney at a manor court held in 1611, after which her name is absent from the court rolls.<sup>1</sup> George, her husband's brother, continued to look after the estates until the coming of age of her only son John Betts, but of that later.

In 1613, Syeth Betts, George's eldest sister, died. By her short will she divided her money among her brothers and sisters, leaving small legacies to Bridgit's children and her cousins John and Richard Awgar. Twenty shillings she gave to the repair of Wortham almshouse, and twenty shillings each to Thos. Levrington (who had succeeded John Parsley) Minister of Wortham, and to Elnathan Parr Minister of Palgrave. The residue to her brother George the sole executor.

The Rev. Elnathan Parr, the legatee of poor Syeth, was, as will be shown, an ancestor of a later generation of the Betts family. Author of several works, his best known book being "Grounds of Divinity," he had in 1600 been presented to the living of Palgrave by the Cornwallis family, and when thirteen years afterwards Jane Lady

<sup>1</sup> Susan, daughter of William Smith of Thelnetham, widow of Richard Betts of Wortham, married secondly, Robert, son of Richard Smith of Thrandeston, Suffolk, for 50 years philiser for Co. Norfolk in Common Pleas.—"Genealogical Notes of the Family of Cullum," by G. Milner-Gibson Cullum, Esqre., F.S.A.

Cornwallis, the widowed lady of Brome Hall, asked his advice in negotiations of a delicate character, the learned divine did not refuse his good offices.

The fact was that another neighbour of his, Sir Nicholas Bacon, son of the Lord Keeper, who was blest with nine sons, was then seeking to procure the hand of the well endowed Lady Cornwallis for Nathaniel, the youngest ; and Elnathan Parr "of grave and reverend countenance," was well suited to win the lady's confidence, and act as matrimonial go-between.

The first advances are in quite the professional manner ; the marriage broker tells the lady how anxious a certain gentleman is to be introduced to her. Becomingly coy, the fair widow replies : " I hope you will remember what I said to you at your being here, as that you have no incoregement to the gentleman ; " however, at the end of the letter, a little shy "incoregement " is slipped in : " the gentleman being so desirous to see me as you said he was, I thought then as I do now, it wore uncivell part of me to forbid him coming, but left it you know to himself, and so I do still." The letter was directed, " To my kind friend Mr Parr."

The coquettish widow's next letter to her " varie kind friend Mr Parr " shows that her suitor's parents had adroitly intervened. " Wareas," she writes, " you say that Sir Nicholas and my La : expects their son should have such grate prefarment by me, I must answer againe, that they have made it seem other wayes to me, in asseuring me that it was myselfe and not My fortune which they desired ; but," adds the astute lady, " I maye greatly feare that I shall finde my fortune to be the chiefe motive . . . if I do, it will much discourage me from persevering

any further in it ; Praye let my love be remembered to Mrs. Parr."

Next the reverend broker is instructed by the lady to put on a face of indifference to the gentleman's offer. That it was a pure matter of bargain was not disguised, and the lady showed plainly to " my varie kind friend," that she considered herself worth a higher price, and now protested that she had her son, " pretty Frede's " interests, to think of. She writes indignantly : " I must tell you that I did never expect that you would have been a persuader of me to a gave awaye the increase of my owne estate, seeing that you have ever heard me earnestli to protest that I would not, though I had married to a much greater fortune than Sir Nicholas Bacon doth offer with his son ; for I would never have done my child so much wronge, though I might have had all the good of the world by it. . . . Besides, whatsoever you and the rest of Mr Bacon's friends think of my fortune in present, I know any indifferent bodi will saye it doth desERVE faur greater offers then hath ben yet made me. . . if it should now appear to me that all this was but done to entice my affection, would be a grate reson to direct it another waye, and I fere I shall find such hard mesure."

And then we have a letter to the reverend go-between from Lady Bacon, which puts the business aspect of the affair from her son's side, equally without disguise. " We have offered," she says, " what we are abell, and what we can and will faythfully perform. If it be acceptable we shall rejoyse much therein ; if not we must be contented without grudging asseuring ourselves it is the Lord's doing. And although the juell layd before us be never



so riche, if we be not abill to buy it, we must be content to forbeare it. We must not leye out all our stocks upon one purchus, having so many others to provide for."

The bargain, was at last struck ; and on the 1st of May 1614 Master Nathaniel Bacon became the proud possessor of the fair widow and her still fairer fortune. Let us hope that that "faithfull and painefull preacher Mr Elnathan Parr, Batchelour in Divinitie," had the satisfaction of tying the nuptial knot. In 1632 he dedicated the third edition of his works to Nathaniel, as "the very noble and religious knight Sir Nathaniel Bacon," and to "the very honourable and most worthy lady the lady Jane Bacon," whom he describes as "late his (Sir Nathaniel's) wife now widdow" !

Bridgit Herne only survived her sister, Syeth Betts, a few months, dying in 1614 in her 38th year ; her burial is recorded in the Wortham registers. John seems to have made a home for himself soon after, taking with him his sister Maryona ; we find the entry of her death some seventeen years later in the Diss Registers, and George, now past his youth, was left alone.

Not more than five miles from Wortham is the village of Yaxley, where in the beginning of the seventeenth century dwelt the Fulchers or Folsers, a family already mentioned, which had there persisted since the date, and probably since long before the date, of Domesday Book. At the time of which we write, this family was represented by Master Rycharde Fulcher, on whose daughter Rose the lonely George Betts now cast his affections. Cannot we imagine sober George riding over in the cool of the evening to discuss the state of the crops with



Master Fulcher, and retailing the latest gossip to Mistress Fulcher and her daughters ; while he sipped the mead or home-made wine they brought out for his refreshment.

This happy wooing was not long adoining ; and in 1619 the Yaxley registers record the marriage, the bridegroom being then thirty-nine and the bride eleven years younger.

A year after the marriage of George and Rose Betts their eldest child Rose was born ; then another daughter Elizabeth ; and in 1624 a son, who was the third Betts to bear the name of George. After him came four more sons, John, James, Hillary, and Daniel the youngest who was baptized in 1636.

There remains to us a MS. parchment-covered notebook, filled with household and other recipes by the careful hands of George Betts and his wife ; and by the help of its closely filled pages it is possible partly to reconstruct their domestic life at Wortham.

Mistress Betts was evidently something of a leech, as well as a careful housewife, and while her husband rode or walked " abroad " to see that no " thistles or other superfluous weedcs annoyed his corne," she would be preparing simples such as " a rare drink for ye scurvy," which combined in one nauseous draught, watercress, scurvy grass, sage, wormwood, celandine, scabious leaves, agrimony, roots of bitterweed, fennel, and parsley.

When little Rose came crying to her mother with a purple bruise, or one of the boys proudly showed a bleeding finger, she would bind the place with a plaster compounded of the herb " all heal " and hogs suet, believing with George Herbert that " Herbs gladly cure our flesh because they find their acquaintance there."

When her husband complained of rheumatism, Mistress Betts had an unfailing remedy : a sheet dipped in specially prepared warm lime and water was wrapped round the sufferer.

Cherry, cowslip, and ebilun (elderberry) wines were made at Wortham ; and beer was specially brewed with raisins, from a recipe given to Rose Betts by her neighbour Lady Gawdy, a daughter of Sir Nicholas Bacon of Redgrave, whose tomb erected in 1621, by Philip Colby her second husband, may still be seen in Redgrave Church.

When after a long day's sport in the field, George would bring his cronies to dine at Wortham, his wife was wont to set before them her far-famed "cock ale," made after the following recipe in her note-book :—

"Boyle a cocke when he is dressed in some of the wort, and if you will a neats tongue too, and when they are boyled all to bitts, then streine them into the rest of the wort hauinge bin 3 houeres well boyled alsoe and well wrought. You must alsoe boyle spices, and some raisons also with the meat ; then put it in a vessell and let it stand about 3 weekes after it haue done working ; then bottell it up, and within a weeke or tenn days after it is fitt to drinke. Flesh doe much quicken and make briske the Ale."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it was after such a draught that George entered in the note-book under the heading "jocs" :

*"Incipe cum Liquido sicco finire memento ;"*

but one turned the verse thus :

*"Incipe cum Liquido sic o finire memento ;"*

lines which may be freely rendered :—

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<sup>1</sup> In 1668 Sir William Temple wrote that the Prince of Orange (afterwards King William III.) "preferred cock ale to any sort of wine."

Begin with wet, but this say I,  
Do not forget to end with dry ;

and

Always begin good cheer with wet,  
And end the same way—don't forget.

Another "joc" of his is, "when a master was blaming of his servant for drinking, telling him it would shorten his days," he turned the rebuke thus, "Truth sir, for when I refuse drink I think the days seem long."

The river Waveney runs within a stone's-throw of the house at Wortham, and in consequence we find elaborate directions in the note-book for the making of all sorts of nets, and the prices of "London twine." Now that sea fish are so cheap and easily procured, we have lost the art of cooking fresh-water fish, but Mistress Betts knew many ways of making it savoury. Here is one of her recipes, which though cruel is really no worse than our custom of boiling lobsters alive.

"Take carpes aliue and bleed at the taile, gitt as much blood as you can and putt it into a deepe pan with as much claret wine as will more than half couer the fish ; put in a bunch of sweete hearbes, an onjon quartered, a little mace ; keepe the fish with turning till it be stued enough, then let the liquor be the sauce, but take the onjon out, and the hearbes, only let the leaues of the hearbes be stripped into ye sauce ; then put in butter and make the sauce salt enough, you may add an anchouie and good store of pickled oysters."

Nets were also used for catching wild fowl in the fens near the Waveney.

The slow flowing rivers of Norfolk and Suffolk were special preserves for swans ; the privilege of keeping them

being confined to people who owned a certain extent of land, whose marks cut on the swan's beaks were according to law registered in rolls with their names.

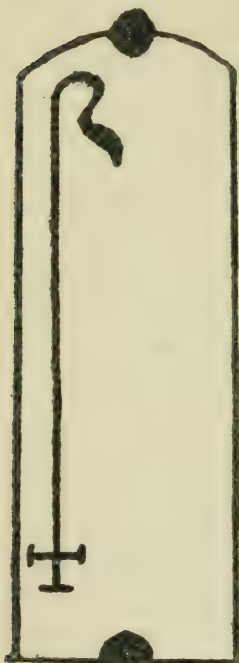
Queen Elizabeth possessed a great number of the royal birds in East Anglia, and had her distinctive mark.

Her chief swanner for Norfolk and Suffolk was one Sir Edward Cleere. To this day the corporation of Norwich own numbers of swans, and at their annual "swan-upping" the city's mark is nicked in the soft beaks of the cygnets.

The Betts preserved among the family papers a curious assignment of a Swan Mark from a certain John Allen of Thetford to Bartholomew Gascoigne gent. of Kenninghall. George Betts the third was destined to marry this Gascoigne's granddaughter; but that event was still "on the knees of the gods" when in 1605 John Allen "did give graunt bargaine and sell unto the said Bartholomew, Susanna his wife and Edmund their son, all that his

Swanne Marke called the Lamme hocke which is expressed, mentioned and set forth in the margent of this present wrighting."

Detected thieves of swans were subject to a peculiar penalty by way of compensation to the owners for their loss. It is laid down by Sir Edward Coke that: "He who stealeth a swan in an open and common river, lawfully



marked ; the same swan shall be hung in a house by the beak ; and he who stole it shall in recompense thereof, give to the owner so much wheat as may cover all the swan, by putting and turning the wheat upon the head of the swan until the head of the swan be covered with wheat."

Students of obsolete laws will be reminded of the compensation which Blackstone records was extorted from the slayer of a royal cat ! The corpse of the poor "*custos horrei regii*"—guardian of the King's granary—was to be hung by the tail, with nose touching the floor, and so to be heaped over with grain until the last hair of its protesting tail disappeared beneath it.



## CHAPTER X

1627-1652

JOHN BETTS OF WORTHAM, ROYALIST—ROSE BETTS MARRIES  
AN “INTRUDED MINISTER”—PULPIT FULMINATIONS  
AGAINST PARLIAMENT

**G**EORGE Betts' nephew John, the then head of the family, had returned to live at Wortham in 1627, and his name appears that year as one of the trustees of the “town lands” belonging to the parish. Soon after, George removed to “a tenement called Stanforths” (not now to be identified), which he purchased from John.

The lord of the manor of Wortham, now called Wortham Hall to distinguish it from Wortham Abbots, was Mr, afterwards Sir Henry Felton; he was a friend of the Betts, but his name was soon to become a byword throughout Great Britain. Strange that this manor of Wortham should be associated through the family names of its lords, with two political crimes infamous in history. To a man of the name and blood of Sir Thomas Tyrell, the lord of 1483, was attributed the murder of the young Princes in the Tower; and now in 1628 it was a relative of Sir Henry Felton, Lieutenant John Felton who was the assassin of the Duke of Buckingham.

Some little time before, the Duke had been urged, by reason of his great unpopularity, to wear a secret coat of

mail ; but it needs not," was his light reply ; " there are no Roman spirits left " ; words soon to be disproved, for in the lining of Felton's hat was found pinned this defiant vindication :—

" That man is cowardly and base, and deserveth not the name of gentleman or soldier, that is not willinge to sacrifice his life for the honor of his God his Kinge, and his countrie. Lett no man commend me for doeinge of it, but rather discommend themselves as the cause of it, for if God had not taken away or hartes for or sinnes, he would not have gone so long unpunished. Jo. Felton."

In 1640, Wortham was assessed for £27, 14s. 6d. ship money, to be collected by that year's constables. The names of the two Betts, uncle and nephew appear : George Betts, gent., 11s. 4d. John Betts, gent., £1, os. 6d.

Opposition was general to this hateful and unconstitutional tax ; but Wortham paid up, as did the adjoining parishes of Redgrave and Brome, the names of Sir Edmund Bacon and Sir Frederick Cornwaleys heading the lists. Palgrave refused to pay at all. " The chief inhabitants of the town," said the constables " are not at home, and the rest refuse to meet or make their rates."

In 1627, Suffolk had addressed " an humble remonstrance " to Parliament, showing the following reasons why the inhabitants of the county should not be forced to contribute to the two ships " impressed on the town and port of Ipswich."

They represented that :—

" First. The town did not contribute to the inland taxes for provisions, carriages, and material for

His Majesty's buildings, during his abode in Thetford and Newmarket.

"Second. The county paid £1050 a year for composition for His Majesty's household.

"£1000 for repair of beacons and bridges.

"£400 for watching beacons, for maimed soldiers, relief of Marshalsea, and King's Bench, to all of which Ipswich did not contribute."

It is significant, that nothing that could in any way reveal the political opinions of the Betts during the Civil Wars, could be discovered among the mass of papers which so far as concerned all other periods of their history, were so carefully preserved by this methodical family at Wortham. It was only after a most careful search, that the chance turning of the fly leaf of an ancient copy of Raleigh's "History of the World," disclosed these half erased lines, which had probably been over-looked when other incriminating documents were cautiously made away with :—

"When men can freely put the question  
Or God in mercy raise againe  
Or gracious K.C. and his sonnes  
O'er Englishmen againe to raigne."

That the writer, George Betts in all probability, was a Royalist is made clear beyond a doubt, but as he had passed his sixtieth year before the outbreak of hostilities, it is unlikely that he took part in the fighting.

After the Restoration, we have further evidence ; many hundreds of yellow old MS. sermons preached by members of the family have been found at Wortham, from one of

which the following lurid picture of Commonwealth times has been extracted :—

“ As soon as ye Long Parliament departed from their allegiance, what a scene of confusion and desolation then followed. Almighty God here suffered by his permission, tyranny and rebellion to be successful and prosperous, but, alas, how did they manage that victory, they made a great reformation in Church and State in the Church, by pulling down her walls & pillars by devouring her land, destroying her ornaments, defacing her beauty, extirpating her primitive and apostolick government, abolishing her excellent Liturgy, throwing away all forms of publick worship . . . They reformed the State likewise by oppression of the people, by exhausting the wealth of the kingdom, by the subversion of the fundamental laws and all the sacred privileges of Parliament, cashiering the Peers of the Realm, and at last accomplishing the ruin of ye monarchy seizing upon his sacred Majesty and committing him as if a thief or a robber to ye prison.

“ They pretended to aim at nothing more than the honour and happiness of ye king in delivering him from evil counsellors, and security of the subjects in their liberties and rights, and the glory of God in the purity of Religion : varnishing over their wicked designs with the cause of God ; and this method took strangely with the people, that large contributions were raised to promote and carry on this bloody design, for immediately upon it what storms, what outrages of cruelty and violence, what spoils and rapine, how many thousands of brave and loyall subjects were cut off, King and laws laid aside as useless, and the nation’s ears nailed to ye

door posts of ye Tyranizing and rebellious House of Commons.

“ Taking it in all its circumstances it was perhaps the greatest and most comprehensive sin, next to the crucifixion of the Son of God, and the sin against the Holy Ghost, that any of Adam’s degenerate race was guilty of since ye creation of ye world, to arraign and condemn God’s sacred viceregent.”

What the clergy suffered, may be inferred from the calumnies of their adversaries the Puritan Ministers in the days of their power. In 1642, one Mr Simon Ash preaching before the House of Commons designated the loyal clergy as “ blind seers, dumb dogs, idle drones schismatical heretical & scandalous men,” and in 1643, another preacher also exulted in the sufferings of his brethren. “ How many dumb devils,” he sneered, “ are now casting out of many parishes in the land.” And verbal abuse was translated into acts of cruel tyranny. In Wortham it is true that the rectors of both medieties managed, perhaps by signing the “ Protestation,” to keep their livings ; but though they escaped, the incumbents of most of the neighbouring parishes suffered.

In 1644, after forty-eight years ministry, the aged Mr Sayer vicar of Hoxne, was ejected on a trivial charge. At Palgrave, the rector Thomas Honekin or Howchine was, according to Walker, “ harried and frightened into a resignation, after which he lived a retired and melancholy life,” dying at Thelnetham, a neighbouring parish in 1646. The unfortunate Howchine was son-in-law, as well as the successor as rector of Palgrave, of our old friend Elnathan Parr, and so, as will be shewn, a



direct ancestor of the later Betts. The rector of Oakley John Gordon also suffered.

Wives of "plundered ministers" were, according to Parliament law, entitled to one fifth of the value of the livings their husbands had been deprived of, but before the amount could be recovered from the new rectors, proof was required that the ejected ministers were alive. It is recorded in one case, that the usurper obstinately refused to admit that the late incumbent was in the land of the living, and when the poor man came to his door in person, turned him away with the words "that though he was naturally alive, yet he was dead in trespasses and sins, and therefore nothing was due to him." In Diss, the rector Edward Palgrave, B.D. was ejected, and Richard Moore, A.M., who had signed the Protestation was put in his place. This touched the Betts family nearly, for Rose the eldest daughter of George Betts became the wife of the intruded minister Mr Moore.

The marriage is proved by the family deeds, but is not registered at Wortham; it most likely took place before a Justice according to the Parliament law. Puritans objected even to the use of the ring in marriage, and no longer were the ancient seasons for matrimony observed. "Marriage," as we read in the Wortham Register, referring to former times, "comes in on the 13th of January. It goes out on Septuagesima Sunday. It comes in again the day after Low Sunday. It goes out again Rogation Sunday. It comes in again after Trinity Sunday. It goes out Advent Sunday."

The Wortham manor rolls record the death in 1648 of John Betts, the head of the family, at the age of fifty.

Of this John, the family records tell us little. Five

years earlier his name had disappeared from among the trustees of the Wortham town lands ; he died intestate ; his burial is not entered in the parish registers.

Can it be that he fell—if so, no doubt on the royalist side—at the battle of Preston, fought a month or so before the manor court was held ? A small oval Royalist badge, and a complete suit of armour of that period were among the treasures at Wortham, both may have belonged to him.

The court rolls of the manor show that John Betts left four children all under age, Thomas, Andrew, Susan and Mary ; his widow Elizabeth, who soon married one Nicholas Sucklinge, was appointed their guardian.

In 1652, George Betts of Stanforths died in his seventy-second year. By his will, made twelve years before, he left all his lands to Rose his wife, with the reversion at her death to George his eldest son. To each of his other sons John, James, Hillary and Daniel, he gave some acres of land and a hundred pounds in “lawful English money,” and to each of his daughters Rose and Elizabeth he left the same sum. A hundred pounds was considered at that time a fair fortune for a gentleman’s daughter.

## CHAPTER XI

1648-1665

THE BETTS FARMING ACCOUNTS—WAGES AND RENTS—  
A BARTHOLOMEW CONFESSOR ON THE GREAT PLAGUE

FROM the accumulated mass of Wortham papers, has been rescued an ancient account book, containing entries of wages, rents and so forth from 1656 to 1710. It is bound in brown paper worn as thin as tissue, and dated outside 1648, but unluckily a few pages are missing. Some of the entries are of interest as showing the cost of living at that time :—

*“ Mistress Cavelet’s ” bill of May 20th 1656*

|   | £  | s. | d.  |
|---|----|----|-----|
| “ For $\frac{1}{2}$ load of straw . . . | 0. | 5. | 0.  |
| 1 lb. of butter . . .                   | 0. | 4. | 0.  |
| a peck of rye . . .                     | 0. | 0. | 7.  |
| Constables eating . . .                 | 0. | 0. | 5.” |

On March 25th 1664 servants wages are entered :

|                                    |     |     |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| “ Joseph his half yeares wages . . | £2. | 10. | 0.  |
| Katherin Smith hir wages . .       | £1. | 0.  | 0.” |

Another man Sam received £1. 15s. The men’s wages were considerably more than double the wage paid half a century before, as witnesseth an old ballad of 1609 :—

“ The serving man waiteth from street to street,  
 With blowing his nails and beating his feet ;  
 And serveth for forty shillings a year,  
 How can he be merry and make good cheer ? ”

And the yearly wage of women servants had risen proportionably.

Except during the civil wars, labourers' wages were, as already mentioned, annually fixed by proclamation of the county justices at quarter sessions holden at Bury. During the wars they received seven pence to eight pence daily. This was raised in 1651 to one and two pence, when the price of wheat was over sixty-five shillings a quarter, and meat was about five per cent. above its usual price, which had been three pence a pound for mutton and two pence a pound for beef.

Agriculture was perforce neglected during “ these unfaithful times,” but in the end the temporary stagnation worked for good. Confiscated estates fell into the hands of practical farmers ; new interest in agriculture was evoked, and scientific farming, advocated by the writings of Platts, Hartlib and Blyth, became the rule.

“ The newe forme of corne setting,” a machine called a drill, lightened the labours of the farm ; and the lately introduced cultivation of turnips and clover enabled the farmer, if so minded, to keep sheep and cattle through the winter. The general custom before turnips were introduced had been to slaughter and salt and hang up enough beasts in November to last through the winter ; as recommended by Tusser :—

“ (For Easter) at Martilmas, hang up a beef,  
 For stall-fed & pease-fed play pick-purse the thief,

With that and the like, ere an grass beef come in  
Thy folk shall look cheerly, when others look thin."

The Betts account book shows however, that at first, improvements notwithstanding, the Restoration did not bring better times to the farmer. Against June 3rd, 1670 is the following entry :—

" Rec : then of John Clarak in full of his halfe yeares rent endinge on or Lady day last past, in money 6lb. 5s. 6d., for makinge 3 loade of woode 4s. 6d., abated him in consideration of ye hardness of the times 10s. in all £7."

Two years before, the same tenant had had his rent abated for the same reason ; he was a glazier as well as farmer, for 8s. 11d., is then reckoned in his rent " for glazinge the Hall windows."

But later, the account book shows a great increase of rents. For example, we find this entry for 22nd May 1684 : " Reced. then of Robt. Case for rent by George Betts ye sum of eighteen pounds. I say recd." Two years later, this rent is raised to £24 ; and another piece of land, let in 1669 at £5, was raised to £10.

" A paire of fowles " are entered in 1667 as bought for one and sixpence, and " a paire of soales for sixpence."

Dwelling at Eye in 1649, were two well-known Parliamentarians described in a somewhat confused contemporary document as " Thomas Deye of Moore Hall gent and Thomas Deye of Stairhouse gent younger brother of the father of the other. Thomas Deye of Moore Hall hath 200£ p.a. and the other about 300£. Either of them is married to a daughter of Simon Bloomfield sometime of Coddendam gent." At the first glance this last sentence is amusingly ambiguous, " either," we may suppose should have been written " each." The



Deye family intermarried with the Betts, and like that family is now extinct in the male line. A memento of Thomas Deye of Moore Hall passed to his descendants of Wortham, in the shape of a large silver porringer bearing his name engraved ; it was sold at Christie's in 1906 for £250. His uncle Thomas Deye of Stairhouse, according to the same old document lent fifty pounds upon " the Propositions of Parliament " for raising money at eight per cent., at the beginning of the war.

In 1649, Thomas Deye of Moore Hall was made treasurer of the rates levied by Parliament on the town of Eye, and his accounts thereof are among the Betts MSS. The first rate made in 1649 was for three months pay for the maintenance of the forces in England and Ireland. " There was charged upon the county £4700 per mensem, and upon the towne of Eye p. mensem £30, 14. 1." Thomas Deye, sen., gent, was rated at £25. 10s. a year and for £50 stock. Thomas Deye the nephew is rated at £76, and for his meadowes and stock £212.

In July 1650, there was another rate made " for the maintenance of the forces under Oliver Cromwell Esq., Capt. Generall of England & Ireland." That year, there were also two further rates made upon the town of Eye. One was for drums and colours at £16. 13. 4. The other, which Thomas Deye treasurer for the hundred " appoints to be paid ye 31st of August " at Eye, is headed : " the rate for Drums and Trumpetts according to an order from the Commissioners, and likewise for payment of Officers and other Imergent Occasions, for putting this County into a posture of Defence upon the New Modell ; this hundred Charged with the sume of 169lb. 4s. od. for halfe of that payment. Upon this towne 16lb. 18s. 4d."

In 1652, a monthly assessment is made " by the present Parliament for the raising of 120,000 lb. per mensem for and towards the maintenance of the Armies in England, Scotland, and Ireland, together with the Navie att Sea. Charged upon the County, 6266lb. 13s. 4d. per mensem."

Cromwell's war with the Dutch accounts for the " Navie att Sea " being coupled with the maintenance of three armies. In the case of defaulters, who either could not or would not pay, the rates were levied by distraint, their goods being carried to London and sold by the candle, *i.e.*, for the highest bid made during the flicker of a certain length of candle.

The two Thomas Deyes, uncle and nephew, were successively bailiffs of Eye, and their names occur in 1650 and 1653, as holding the annual courts of pie powder at Finningham fair, over which fair the bailiffs and burgesses of Eye presided.

At such courts of " dusty feet," the duty of Justices was to determine petty disputes, fix the assize of victuals, and test weights and measures.

In January 1686, at a sitting at Eye upon Excise, two offenders from Wortham were convicted by the Justices, of whom Thomas Deye was one. " Joseph Singleton in respect of two Barrells of Ale non Entry and non payment of Exise doble duty 10s. Costes 10s "; and John Lyst for the like offence. The convictions were signed by " Jo : Castleton and Thos. Deye."

The village inn at Wortham, at the time of this " sitting upon excise," was then, and still is, known as " Tumble-down-Dick," or " the Dick " for short. Until lately, it displayed a painted sign made in derision of the fall of Richard Cromwell, representing a man falling off a table.

In 1661, the year after the Restoration, Rose Betts' husband, Richard Moore the intruded rector of Diss, had been among the " Bartholomew confessors," who, for having refused to comply with the " Act of Uniformity," were in their turn ejected from their livings. He retired, probably to his own property " The Common Farm " at Diss ; but that he continued to preach is in evidence, for we find in the year of the great plague a quaintly phrased sermon in his hand-writing on the text " The Lord sent a Pestilence in Israel."

The austere old preacher no doubt voiced the prevailing views of the causes and course of the plague. First, he attributes the awful visitation to the Nation's sins, " The undercause," he deems to have been famine. " Surely that may be the proper Cause of the Plague say the Phisitians : for the Poore at such time of dearth beinge constrained through want to eat such things as are not Good ; but corrupt and unwholesome ; their food corrupts and putrifies their Bodyes, from whence proceedeth noisesome and infectious diseases.

" But here, it may be objected that many men and women who fare choicely and daintily and wholesomely, yet are infected notwithstanding, and dye of the plague.

" I answer ; that there be many other under Causes, not yet specified, and among others this is one : corrupt airs ; the Air beinge corrupted through the Putrification and unseasonableness of the weather, and beinge sucked into the body of man, corrupteth the vital spirits also, and so infects him.

" It is called the arrow that flieth by day. An arrow flys swiftly and falls suddenly : So the Pestilence catcheth hold of a man so swiftly and suddenly, that





DOCTOR CHESTER

*One of the few physicians who remained in London during the Great Plague*



many are marked out for death, before they feel themselves sick at all.

“ Its called the Pestilence that walketh in darkness ; That is first, Its a walking disease ; It creepes, it goes, it walks, from one to another by the Contagion of the Aire or Clothes of a Man.

“ Its called the sickness that destroyeth at noonday. Its *non debilitans*, it seizes on the vital Spirits, kills him on a suddaine in his full strength. It kills not only one or two, or some few ; but where it setts in, it doth commonly wast, depopulate and sweepe all away : Whole houses, whole Streets, whole townes and Cities have been brought to nought by it.”

Another MS. sermon in a different handwriting, is the utterance of a man living perchance in Wortham, in the midst of the Great Terror :

“ As for the effects of the Pestilence I need not tell you what they are, every day's experience makes us acquainted with the ill news of our friends' and neighbours' visitation.”

The last generation of the Betts of Wortham through the Doughty family, could claim as a direct ancestor, one of the few physicians—a certain Dr Chester—who did not run away from his professional duties in London, during the Great Plague.

## CHAPTER XII

1665-1672

### CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT OF A CONTESTED ELECTION

**I**N the spring of 1665, just before the coming of the Plague, died the widowed Rose Betts, her unmarried daughter Elizabeth having predeceased her. Of her five sons, two were then married: James and Hillary. They had both sought their fortunes in the Norwich weaving industry; Hillary made his home in Norwich, but James returned to his native neighbourhood and settled at Diss. There, his first child Rebecca was born, to be later followed by a son called James after his father, and then another daughter, Mary.

George married soon after his mother's death, but his married life did not last long, Mary his wife dying in 1669, after the successive births and deaths of two infant daughters.

The other brothers had after their mother's death, sold their several portions of land to George; and in the same year George also purchased from his cousin Thomas, son of the royalist John Betts, what remained of his share of the family estate. Andrew the younger son of John Betts had died in 1660, leaving his inheritance to his sisters Susan and Mary. Susan married Nicholas Browne, and Mary became Mrs John Thompson.

From Mary Thompson, who died in 1669 leaving no children, her land passed to her sister Susan Browne, who in 1682 sold both shares to her cousin George Betts. After that date, the names of the elder branch of the family no longer appear in the Court Rolls. The acres alienated by them, were, however, bit by bit bought back by George.

A letter written on February 6th 1672 by Thomas Deye describes what a Suffolk county election was like more than two centuries ago. This by-election of 1672 had been rendered necessary by the death of Sir Henry North, one of the knights of the Shire. Mr Deye's letter is addressed to Sir George Reeve brother-in-law of Sir Edmund Bacon of Redgrave, and one of the sitting members for the borough of Eye.

The candidate for the vacancy was, on the Royalist side, the eldest son of Sir Lionel Tollemache of Helmingham, Lord Huntingtower, his mother being Countess of Dysart in her own right. His opponent was Sir Samuel Barnardiston of Kenton, the head of a family of strong Parliamentary opinions.

Sir Samuel, it is said, had been the unconscious cause of the name of Roundhead being bestowed on the Parliament party. The story runs that when an apprentice in London, he took part in the riots created by Lansford's apprentices. Queen Henrietta Maria, who was watching from a window, noticing the tall young man, cried: "See what a handsome young roundhead is there!" It will be seen that Sir Samuel, though now older by half a lifetime, had not forgotten how to make a riot.

Thomas Deye's opinions had evidently undergone a remarkable change since the time when he was treasurer,

under Parliament, for the Hundred of Hartismere. His letter omitting merely formal parts reads thus :—

“ It wold be tedious if not impertinent to kavell the Methode of those endeavors used to obviate the ambition of that person whoe had pride enough to tell my Lord Cornwallys att London and att Ipswich allsoe on the day of election, That Hee cold give him the advantage of fower voyces to one, and shall onely say, such insolence founded uppon the ffanaticke Interest, united the gent. as Concerned in their owne honour and the Country's Cause, and put them to doe their utmost against soe bold a Pretender, and accordingly they laboured to a wonder in that little time they had which was but three dayes to make an Impression uppon Men of sense and sobernes, and soe farr prevailed therein, and soe prudently ordered the conduct of their Busines, That on Sunday night my Lord Cornwallys accompanied with Sir Edmund Bacon and the gent. of Burye division, Rode into Ipswich at the Head of more a thousand ffreeholders whoe came out of Hartsmere Hundred and the ffranchise of Burye : Sir John Duke, Mr Duke and the Gent. of Beccles Came in allsoe in other parties, Monday morninge brought in Sir Henry ffelton and Sir Robert Brooke on the one side of the Towne and Sir William Doyly and some others on the other side : All brought in the Lord Huntingtower and appeared a gallant and noble Traine and in a Solemn and grave Order : Sir Samuell wanted not a man allmost in the whole County of a factious fanaticke principle, and all the Crewe of the meaner sorte of Traders out of the Clothinge and great Townes, besides a strange Rabble of poore Common Seamen, gathered upp from all places in and neare the county. All armed with Clubbes and

great staves as designed for terror. Beeinge thus driven on with the fire and heate of the zealots and factions, and the furye and madnes of the seamen and Common Rout, You will not wonder that Hee made his entrye with noyse and Clamor with disorder and terror. Appearinge to the Gent. like another Tamberlaine who was styled Ira Dei and a scourge to the World. Nothinge but the Courage of the Gent. and the Comfort of Servinge their Country faithfully cold have borne upp against such a Torrent : The Mannage of the Affaire and the order of it as to Clarkes etc was agreed uppon and settled over night by the Sheriff whose office gave him the sole power. Care was especially taken for the Clarkes, that such might be att his Booth as might bee honest and vigilant to prevent (at least not to bee tooe forward to accept of) the non Residents and Rabble not qualified to vote : But Hee sawe his power in theise people tooe great, and them tooe insolent to Receive but rather give Lawes : Indeed both the Sheriff and Gent. stood stifly to have those Clarkes which were ordered to him, But hee required his owne and such as were fitted for the purpose and had enough of the faction : the Debate held until Wee had polled 5 or 600 att my Lords Booth, But then the Clubb Lawe prevailed and the seamen began to fire into tumult. The Sheriffs Wyfe swooned att the affright, and the Sheriff yielded, the Gent. shrunke or withdrewe as beinge willinge not to perish by the hand of the enraged Multitude and indeed S<sup>r</sup> all sober men that stood neere doe declare That the Gent. (especially Sir Henry ffelton) were in manifest peril of their lives : Nor were Wee att my Lords Booth in much lesse danger and knewe it not, for some seamen gave the word to pull downe the Booth but the



rest not understandinge which, fell uppon that which was next which was Sir Samuell's beinge eager to lay hold on our Gent. there, they in the Rere called out my Lords Booth, but the other were tooe busye to heare them. And so Sir William Bloys like a sober and worthy Gent. used all persuasions to pacifie the Multitude. By whose Entreaties (Sir Samuell not vouchsafing to speake a word) the Sheriff yieldinge some of the Gent. withdrawinge, and the rest complyinge, the seamen Cooled and danger disappeared: S<sup>r</sup> you will better comprehend than I howe much the amatinge [terrifying] of our Gent, the actuatinge of the seamen's heate, and the fixinge of such Clarkes, might contribute to the Encrease of his Poll: When the Pollinge was finished, which was by the close of the day (each Booth havinge six Clarkes) the High Sheriff with the Lords and Gent. of both sides went upp into the Towne Hall to number the Bookes, and there waited Sir Samuell, After a long Expectation and before any entrance uppon the worke, they sent to him, Hee returned an answere not full of Civility and scorned to come amongst them, I am sure he came not, soe they were compelled to proceed without him. It was uppon my hand to take the Nombres of each page after the Tellers, and to Add them together from Booke to Booke, my Lord's Bookes were faire and signed by each Clarke that toke them. Sir Samuell's were otherwise. When all was brought into grosse Nombres the totall Account arose thus: My Lord had 2202: Sir Samuell 2280: But the indirect practice of the heady people in givinge and of others in procuringe not allowable Votes and the Tumult of the Accont, made the Sheriff Resolve not to declare for Sir Samuell, Believinge the trewe number of loyall Electors

to be some Hundreds on my Lords side. And had the Sheriff beene in Capacitie, the proof was pregnant and at hand, for in one Towne and that noe Markett Towne neither, the Minister certified the names of above 20 voters who were not ffree holders, the like was suspected to greater Numbers where the Townes were greater, and the same for non residents and wee feare a greater fraude than that : Uppon the Sheriffs demur danger reappeared, for Sir Samuell att 9 of the Clock att night toke his Chaire and mounted his Beast (I meane the Clubd Multitude) and came to the Hall by Torch light, to tell the Gent. his pleasure and the Sheriff his duty, What Ecchoe his words wold have made uppon that Brazon Wall that followed him, I dreaded to heare lest it shold have struck me deafe till the Resurrection, But it soe happened that the Sheriff and Gent met him att the staires foote and soe had the opportunity to slipp away ; My Lord Cornwalllys, my selfe and some others staid behinde att the Table where wee sate and soe sawe not the Rout, But Sir Edmund Bacon goinge with the Sheriff was soe surprized at the sight, that hee came back with great apprehensions and professinge there was a tumult not to bee suppressed but by the Posse Comitatis : But the Rider’s [Sir Samuel] back beinge turned wee Recollected our selves and in the dark (much better than by Sir Samuell’s Torch light) wee found the way to my Lord Huntingtower with whome Wee supped without Musick or Mirth, other than what arose from the Contemplation of our escaped danger. Wee remembered ’39 [the beginning of the Civil Wars] as seeing it nowe acted over againe with clearer Prognosticks of an approaching ’48 [the year the King was beheaded, reckoned as 1648 up

to 25<sup>th</sup> of March]. If not timely prevented by a Lawe restoring Elections to their antient Composure and peacableness and Raising the valuation of Electors to their old standard of value which is nowe debased as one to twenty : By his Ma<sup>tie</sup> Restraininge at least the insolence of the ffanaticks for if they once came to know their strength in other places as in this, That they are able to Beare downe and Baffle the whole Aristocracye of a County, It will not bee long ere they bee bold to affront Monarchy allsoe : God preserve the King in his power, ye Church in its settlement The House of Commons in their Loyalty. Us in our duty and you in your health Soe prays

Yo<sup>r</sup> most humble Servant

Tho : Deye

ffeb. 26

72.

ffor the Hono<sup>ble</sup> S<sup>r</sup> George Reeve Knt & Barr<sup>t</sup> and member of Parliament at his Lodginges neere Jacobs Coffee House in old Southampton Buildings."

The High Sheriff that year was John Risby, Esq. of Thorpe Morieux ; in spite of his demurs, Sir Samuel Barnardiston was declared duly elected.

Sir Henry Felton of Playford, who is mentioned in the letter, was related to the earlier Sir Henry who was lord of the manor of Wortham when the Duke of Buckingham was assassinated. The Sir Henry of the election was a sitting knight of the shire in 1672, and had, in Cromwell's day, been a member of the "Bare-bones Parliament." He carried on the traditional friendship with the Betts family. Until the sale of 1906 there

remained a copy of Euripides in the Wortham library with the name Henry Felton inscribed therein.

All readers of Evelyn's "Diary" will be familiar with the name of Sir William Doyley. He was one of the commissioners associated with Evelyn, appointed to care for the sick, wounded, and prisoners during Charles II.'s Dutch War ; he had also sat on the Parliament committee for Norfolk during the Civil Wars.

The Lord Cornwalllys, who accompanied Thomas Deye in his ignominious flight from the furious rabble, was Charles the second lord, son of Sir Frederick Cornwalllys of Brome, the "pretty Frede" of his mother's letters of 1613. An ardent Royalist, Sir Frederick had fought for the late King in nearly all his battles, and went into banishment with the young Prince, who at the Restoration created him Baron Cornwalllys of Eye.

Sir John Duke, who came into Ipswich with "the Gent of Beccles," was the owner of Benhall Lodge near Saxmundham, which had been built by his grandfather in 1638.

Sir Robert Brooke, one of those who brought Lord Huntingtower into Ipswich on the day of election, owned Cockfield Hall in Yoxford and was father-in-law to that "sober & worthy Gent" Sir William Bloys of Grun-disburgh. This last named gentleman had been one of the Parliamentary Committee for Suffolk during the Civil Wars.

Sir Edmund Bacon of Redgrave had broken away from all his family traditions by supporting Lord Huntingtower, for the Bacons were Roundheads of the Roundheads ; and Sir Edmund's grandfather, whom he succeeded, had been one of Cromwell's most trusted captains.

Picture the scene on that bleak winter's morning of 1672, Lord Cornwallys and Sir Edmund Bacon, at the head of more than a thousand freeholders, riding through the streets of Ipswich. The gentlemen in long vests and surcoats reaching to the knee, a Persian mode lately introduced by the king, Charles II., their curled "perruques" showing under small plumed hats. Of many colours and varied fashions would be the dress of their followers; some men still in puritanical garb, with Cromwellian breeches and steeple crowned hats, others with the love locks and brave attire of the Cavaliers, or the gay doublets of their youthful days; the red cloaks, green aprons, and broad brimmed hats of the white capped women in the crowd adding here and there a touch of vivid colour; while from the diamond-paned windows in the high gabled plaster and timber houses, patched and painted faces of fashionable dames would appear, gazing on the motley procession, as it clattered along the cobble stones of the antique winding thoroughfares.



## CHAPTER XIII

1674-1685

THE FAMILY BIBLE—"SUSAN GASKIN HAR BOOK"—ASTRO-  
LOGICAL GARDENING—THE NEWMARKET PLOT

**I**N 1674 George Betts married again, his second wife being Susanna, the only child of Edmund Gascoigne of Stowlangtoft, and grand-daughter of the Bartholomew Gascoigne and Susanna Higham his wife of Kenninghall, who had in 1605 bought the swan mark from John Allen. Edmund Gascoigne had married a Wolson, or Wilson as the name is now spelled. She was presumably of the older family of that name who preceded the D'Ewes at Stowlangtoft, for after his marriage Edmund settled at Stowlangtoft. His name appears in the hearth tax returns for that place in 1674, the year of his daughter's marriage with George Betts.

As a childless widower George had, as is shown in the hearth tax returns for Wortham, occupied a small tenement, possibly Stanforths his late father's house, but shortly after his second marriage he seems to have returned to the old home, which had been unoccupied since the death of John Betts.

There remained at Wortham until 1906, a few memorials of Susanna Betts. In the drawing-room was a relic of her maiden days and an example of her skill in needle-

work, a large bead workbasket. The design was a Cavalier listening to a lady seated playing a lute ; in the background were animals and birds ; the deep sides being ornamented with hunting scenes, flowers, buildings, and the name of the embroideress " Susanna Gascoigne 1669."

Among the Wortham linen there was a tablecloth and six napkins, which Susanna probably brought as part of her bridal outfit, the thread spun by her own hands, for spinster was then no meaningless term for an unmarried woman. This damask tablecloth is woven with the date of Susanna's marriage, 1674 ; and for pattern, shows an equestrian portrait of William Prince of Orange, and a view of his palace on the Maas, surrounded by the English Blue Garter motto : " Honi soit qui mal y pense," and the Dutch : " Lange leeft onser victorwesen Prins van Oranje."

The young Prince, King Charles II.'s nephew, was even then, before his marriage with his cousin the Princess Mary of York, the hope of the Protestants of England—and this notwithstanding that we were at the time at war with the Dutch, and were getting decidedly the worst of it.

Dutch privateers and pirates then infested the narrow seas, and all English vessels had to be armed for their own defence.

A parchment deed of sale dated 1678 is in the Wortham collection. The parties to it were members of the Cullum family, who by intermarriage with the Deyes became ancestors of the later Betts of Wortham. By this deed, John Cullum of Ipswich mariner covenanted to sell to William Cullum of Thorndon merchant, a two and thirtieth part of his " new ship ye Mary, of the burthen of 300



WILLIAM CULLUM OF THORNDON  
1622-1700



tuns " (evidently a mere trader), and of all her stock ; and among the stock are specially mentioned " gunns, gunpowder, shott, ammunition, and artillerie."

But a greater treasure than either the basket or tablecloth is the Elizabethan Bible of 1589, which Susanna Gascoigne brought into the Betts family.

On the fly-leaf is written the name of the first owner : " Grizel Gascoigne hir book " ; and on another leaf at the end, is the name of Grizel's descendant, written in a childish scribble, " Susan Gaskin har book shall be." And in " har book " have been entered ever since Susan's marriage, the births and deaths of the Betts of Wortham. The universal custom of entering such events in the Bible may well have come from the frequent absence of other means of recording them during the Civil Wars.

In the Bible, the first entry written before Susan's birth is : " My uncle departed this life upon Tewsdaiy beinge the sixt day of June 1643, and was interred the Wednesday followinge just beneath the ffont toward the North side." No name is added. Only the matrix of a brass now remains at the spot indicated in Stowlangtoft church, the brass itself having probably been torn up by some enthusiastic follower of Dowsing.

So, " Grizel Gascoigne hir book " contains her uncle's only memorial, for there are no entries in the parish registers between the years 1636 and 1644.

Soon after Susanna Gascoigne's marriage with George Betts, her maternal uncle William Wolson wrote the following letter which was found at Wortham. Mr Gascoigne had lately died, and his widow was living with her daughter Mrs Betts. William Wolson was evidently an aged man :—



“ Deare Sister Gascoigne, and Cosen Susan Betts.

“ I thanke you boath for y<sup>or</sup> kind letter received by ye hand of Mr. Gray. I cannot but reioice much to see the good Blessing of God, still followinge you boath, who indeed haue always walked in ye waye of God’s blessing, and such are likelyed to finde it. I reioice with you in ye Christian departure of my Brother Gascoigne. . . . I wish Mr. Betts and your Selfe much joy ; I hope a mutual blessing each to other ; and whereby your Mothers joy will be increased, necessarily in ye happie fruition of y<sup>u</sup> boath. I have little hope of seeing y<sup>u</sup> any more on this earth, y<sup>u</sup> are removed farther into Suffolke, and it was a great journey for me to Stow Langtoft : . . .

“ Deare Relations, I shall die ye more Comfortably in y<sup>t</sup> I know y<sup>u</sup> so well settled, in such a happie contented Condition : having Agur’s portion left y<sup>u</sup>, which y<sup>u</sup> might well have called Achsah’s ; (Caleb’s daughter Josh : 15. 16 ad 19) but y<sup>t</sup> your Modestie humilitie, and y<sup>t</sup> which most of all makes it soe, is your Contentation ; that doth it : and indeed such an Estate is happiest ; for it is ye friest from Contempt, and Enuie : . . .

“ Deare Sister and cosins wishing y<sup>u</sup> much happines and prosperitie, each in other, and all of us in ye Lord : and desiring much my service to be presented to worthy Mr. Betts ; I take leave and rest, in those neere Relations, wherein it hath pleased God to vnite us, and I hope by y<sup>u</sup> accepted,

“ Y<sup>e</sup> ever affectionate Brother, and Vncle William Wolson.

“ When I gott to ye topp of ye hill, going from y<sup>u</sup>, I was wont to looke back againe to you : as shewing how loath I was to depart : So now by letter cold I write a whole

Sheete of paper yet I must bidd y<sup>u</sup> once againe heartily  
*farewell*

“ These

ffor his deare sister Mrs. Gascoigne at Mr. Betts  
his house in Wortham.”

The writer's allusion to Achsah's portion—the blessing of “ the south field and upper springs and nether springs ”—was perhaps meant actually, as well as metaphorically, to refer not only to his niece's happy state of neither poverty nor riches, but also to a natural curiosity in the field called the “ Wonges,” on her husband's lands, where, in one almost flat meadow, two rivers take their rise, one the Little Ouse, running north into the Wash, and the other the Waveney, south and east into the German Ocean.

The varied interests of a quiet country life are indicated by the remarks inserted by George and Susanna Betts in the family note-book.

Susanna was fond of gardening, a fashion just then at its height. She gives directions for the “ Ordering of my millions ” (pumpkins are still known as “ millions ” in Suffolk). The seeds were to be steeped in milk, and sown in a hot bed, “ and when they appeare set glasses over them.”

Glass was rarely used for gardening, and greenhouses were almost unknown in England at that time. Readers of Evelyn will remember his amazement at the sight of a “ warming apparatus ” in the Chelsea apothecary's garden, as late as 1683.

Susanna grew flowers mostly for practical purposes, and was “ very curious in all manner of distillery,” such as oil of roses, a sovereign remedy for sore eyes, to be dis-

tilled from the white damask rose on the proper Saint's day. She also would find in a book which was in her library, directions for "the ordering of the Kitchen garden and the planting of strange Flowers." The cinnamon rose, so called from its artificial scent, was to be grown from seed soaked in "milk in which good store of cinnamon hath been steeped," and the seeds when planted were to be watered with the same liquid.

If Mistress Susanna wished for lilies of a purple hue, she could steep her seeds in the lees of red wine to change their complexions; if she desired blue, she could put "Azure or Byse between the rind and the small heads growing about the roots; if green, verdigreace; and thus any other colour."

Much in the same way, she could change the colour and taste of fruit, by innoculating the tree's trunk with the desired colour and perfume, and closing the hole with red or yellow wax; the fruit would then "take the colour and relish of the same."

To make a barren tree fruitful, she was to lay the principal root bare, and drive a pin of old dry ash into it, cut it off close, and seal it with yellow wax.

The mere ashes of a burnt weasel, scattered in the garden, were, the book said, enough to scare away field mice. Less obvious was the device of the burning of stag's fat to drive off toads and frogs, or the "assured rule" that moles would not approach Palma Christi, garlick, and onions.

The very smell of herb rocket was, Susanna read, enough to kill green fly, and—the faith of our ancestors was stupendous—lightning could not possibly strike a garden in which there was a laurel or bay tree.

The superstition about laurel is as old as Tiberius Cæsar, who, "when the weather or aire was anything troubled ever carried a wreath of lawrel about his neck, because that (as Pliny reporteth) is never blasted with lightning."

As to bay, in an old play one of the characters is made to exclaim—

"Reach the bays :

I'll tie a garland here about his head

'Twill keep my boy from lightning."

Susanna Betts has left us directions in her note-book "to make funke," whatever "funke" may be. The fungus called "the Vegetable Beef Steak" answers the description, and is edible, as its name suggests.

"Take," she wrote, "a cap that growes on the side of an Ash, or for want of Ash then other wood, the cap growes like a horses hoofe, hard on the outside but within soft and dry like the funck when it is drest, boile this cap two howres in Ashes and Water or Lie, then lay it into a hott owen as soon as the bread come out, and after it be through drie, beat it well with a hammer, but remember to cutt the cap into broad slices about halfe inch thick before it be boiled."

A leather bound "Ryder's Almanack" for 1683 was the gift of George Betts to his eldest boy, another George.

In this almanac we find a quaint illustration of the anatomy of man's body as it is influenced by the signs of the Zodiac each month; and each day of each month has a sinister or favourable meaning for some part of the human frame. Advice as to health is given. In January "the best physic is warm Diet, warm clothes and a merry honest wife." In February, "the air is not

lasting but oft deceives us to our prejudice." March is the time "to advise with the honest and able astrological Physician."

Can we not fancy the "honest and able astrological physician" tracing a bilious attack to a sign of the Zodiac! yet even to this year of grace he has his successors in the compilers of Old Moore's and Zadkiel's Almanacs.

As the moon was then an indispensable guide in all affairs of life, the Almanac of 1683 gives its readers the following directions to ensure success in the farm and garden:—

"In February, remove grafts of young trees in the last quarter of the moon, being in Aries, Libra, or Scorpio." Herbs were not to be gathered except in a June full moon. Lettuce and radish would not run to seed if sown four days after the full of the moon. "The moon increasing, shear sheep; kill swine in the full moon and the flesh will the better prove in boiling."

Almanacs were expensive, yet how without them, were country folk to guess the exact age of the moon? George Betts knew a way, and in the family note-book entered the following directions: "To knowe the age of the moone." It will be remembered that the year was then reckoned from the 25th of March: "First, take the number of the day of the month, and add thereto the number of the expact (sic),<sup>1</sup> then the number of the month,

<sup>1</sup> Epact—see the table of Moveable Feasts in the Book of Common Prayer.

To find the epact, having the prime or golden number given, the old rule was:—

"Divide by three; for each one left add ten;  
Thirty reject: The prime makes *epact* then."



that is March one, being the first month, and february twelve, being the last ; and when all be put together, then if it want of 29 that is the age of the moone, and if it be more than 29 then cast away 29, and the remainder is the age of the moone. Example :—the 18 day of November 1688, I would knowe the age of the moone ; first I take the day of the month being 18, then I add the number of the month which is nine, then the exact which this yeare is seven, and all make 34, then cast away the 29, and the remainder is 5, soe old is the moone. The exact is 11 more every yeare than the last, as in 1688 it is 7, and 1689 it is 18, and so till 29, but when it comes above 30, then cast away 29 and the remainder is the exact.”

Superstition dies hard in country villages. “ No good ever came of a Sunday moon ” is a saying still current in Suffolk.

“ Law causes ” are entered in the note-book for which “ Mr. Betts ’ ” authority is given. The first, which is not of much interest, is dated 1664 ; the next is a charge of Judge Hide’s, which reads strangely in these days when every man is at liberty to regulate his own religious observances.

“ The officer wanting a man out of his usual seat,” said the learned judge, “ and not seeking him at church, out to present him for it ; the person presented must proue he was there, which if he doe, yet noo damage lies on the officer’s side for it. The officer is to present or procure a justice’s warrant for such as doe not come to hear divine service, although they be there at sermon.”

The last conviction for non-attendance at church was, it is believed, in 1740.

It was no doubt a hardship to be obliged by law to attend Divine Service, but it had its compensations. At rare intervals, news letters, forerunners of our newspapers, would arrive for the squire ; he would pass them on to the parson, and that " pious and painful preacher of God's Word " would, while edifying his congregation in matters of religion, excite their keen interest, by drawing from the news of the day apt illustrations for his discourse.

Thus, one Sunday morning in June 1685, a sermon was preached in Wortham Church by Theophilus Williams, a relation of the Deyes, on the text : " Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." This text the preacher applied to " ye Rebellion in ye West," giving his hearers a vivid description of the then unchecked progress of the Duke of Monmouth.

Mr Williams expressed loyalty but without enthusiasm ; how indeed could James II. be loved by the clergy of that Church which he continually sought to betray ? " The interests of kings and people," this clergyman somewhat weakly asserted, " are wrapt up and linked together, they cannot be happy or miserable asunder, but are usually equal bearers in ye common blessings and misfortunes " ; which was strange hearing for those of his congregation who must have well remembered the undoing and death of one king, and were soon to see the unmaking of another.

The country was very unsettled ; real and pretended plots had succeeded each other all through the late King Charles II.'s, reign. Concerning one of these, the New-market plot of 1683, a warrant was found with the Betts papers, addressed to the constables of Eye, and runs thus :—

“Whereas wee have received a letter from our Lord Lieutenant grounded upon another from one of his Mat<sup>ies</sup> principall Secretarys of State Declaring that there hath bin lately discovered, A horrid design upon his Sacred Mat<sup>ie</sup> and His Royall Highness’ life, which should have been executed in his Mat<sup>ies</sup> return from New Market in March last, which designe hath bin still carryed on, by ill affected and desperate persons, and was to have been seconded by an Insurrection of the same in severall parts of the kingdome. These are therefore in his Mat<sup>ies</sup> name and in persuance of the directions from our L<sup>d</sup>. Lieutenant for the disarming of all such persons as wee suspect to be disaffected to the Government, and forasmuch as wee have reason upon this occasion to suspect all such persons who live in an open breach of the Lawes by frequenting Conventicles, to require you to make diligent search in the houses of all such persons within your Towne of Eye for armes. And if you finde any besides such as belong to the County Militia that then you take them into your Custody. And if any person shall resist or oppose yo<sup>r</sup> soe dooing, That you make returne thereof to us, That so they may be dealt with all according to their demeritts And hereof faile not as you will answer the Contrarye at your perills

“Giuen under our hands and seales this ffourteenth day of July Anno Dom 1683

To Mr. Dan<sup>n</sup> Sheppard  
And to the Constables of  
the Towne of Eye for  
the execution hereof  
These.”

This warrant was signed by five justices :—“ Henry

ffelton, Charles Gawdy, Rob. Broke, Nicho : Bacon and ffram : Gaudy."

A note was added :—"The houses of the severall persons hereunder named are to be carefully searched for armes :—Richard Hayle, James Harvey gent, John Shuckforth, Robt. Dammont."

How this warrant came to be among the Wortham papers is not known, but the families of Harvey and Shuckforth, two of the frequenters of "conventicles," were to be later connected with the Betts family.

The brother of James Harvey, who inherited Bedingfield Hall from his father, had married Grace Cullum, a sister of the William Cullum who had in 1678 bought a share in "ye newe ship called ye Mary." Among the family plate of his descendants the Betts, was a silver pipkin engraved with the quaint old Harvey coat-of-arms. John Shuckforth was a member of an ancient family who had long been settled at Diss; and the history of a branch of this family became later, as will now be shown, interwoven with that of the Betts of Wortham.

## CHAPTER XIV

1642-1691

### A FAMOUS HOSTELRY—PERSECUTION OF WITCHES— ACCOUNTS OF A CAMBRIDGE UNDERGRADUATE

**I**N 1611, a branch of the Shuckforths of Diss had settled in Palgrave, on land bought from Thomas Herne and Bridgit his wife, formerly Bridgit Bettes of Wortham.

The marriage settlement dated 1642 of Henry Shuckforth of Palgrave and Margaret Howchine daughter of the deprived rector of Palgrave, and granddaughter of Elnathan Parr, is among the Betts papers. Margaret's tomb, by the chancel door of Diss Church, may still be seen, though the quaint inscription of 1692, of which Blomfield gives a copy, and the elaborate coat-of-arms of the Shuckforths, are now almost weathered out. In the parish church of Saham-Toney in Norfolk are other early seventeenth-century monuments to cousins of Henry Shuckforth, which show the same arms:—a fess ermine between three two-headed eagles displayed argent—Crest : an eagle's head erased argent.

It seems strange to modern ideas that Henry Shuckforth, though come of old gentry, was content to follow the mechanical trade of a plumber, but students of the past are of course familiar with many such instances. While the elder son of the country gentleman was given a good



education, and if means permitted took his degree at Oxford or Cambridge, the younger was still often bound apprentice. For example, Edmund Bohun, a Suffolk squire of ancient family, enters in his diary for 1689: "In the latter end of the summer I put my eldest son to Cambridge, and bound my third son out to a leather seller."

Pope's satirical lines were written about half a century later :—

"Boastful and rough your first son is a squire,  
Your next a tradesman, meek and much a liar."

In 1688, Samuel eldest son of Henry and Margaret Shuckforth married Catherine Needham.<sup>1</sup> Her brother the Rev. William Needham, a Fellow of Emanuel College, was from 1685 to 1691 chaplain to Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, who gave him the living of Arlesford in Hampshire, and made him Chancellor of St Davids.

It was through Catherine's marriage that the Sancroft letters (see next chapter), relating to the now forgotten "Flowerpot Plot," came to the Shuckforths, and from them into the Betts family.

The year 1688 saw the imprisonment of Archbishop Sancroft and six of his episcopal brethren in the Tower, as a result of their petition against the "Declaration for Liberty of Conscience." King James had ordered this declaration to be read in all churches; Sancroft and his six suffragans, however, declared it "to be illegal and destructive to Church and State."

The seven bishops were regarded by the country as champions of the national religion, and were compared

<sup>1</sup> Proved by their post-nuptial settlement among the Betts papers.

to the Seven Golden Candlesticks, and called the Seven Stars of the Protestant Church. One of the medals struck in their honour was among the treasures of Wortham.

After the public trial and acquittal of the seven bishops, but while the Archbishop was still under the Royal displeasure, William Needham uttered these significant words in a sermon preached in Lambeth Chapel on the 12th August 1688: "Traitors have ever thought to employ the best arts, since they could find colour for fastening the charge of disobedience on those whose ruin was resolved upon for no other reason than a constancy in their religions." Words, soon to be justified, though for a time the revered Archbishop was left in peace.

While the trial of the seven bishops was agitating the minds of his elders, George Betts the younger and his brother Edmund, had been sent to the well-known school of Bury St Edmunds, originally founded by the Abbey. In their "school manual" of Latin and Greek prayers for 1688, is written in a round school-boy hand:—"George Betts his book"—and below is his brother's signature, which he had also written in the old copy-book:—"Edmundus Betts."

Elizabeth, the only other child, was left at home at Wortham.

The boys' journeys to and from school were easily accomplished by means of the stage-coach, as the high road between Norwich and Bury passed through the parish of Wortham.

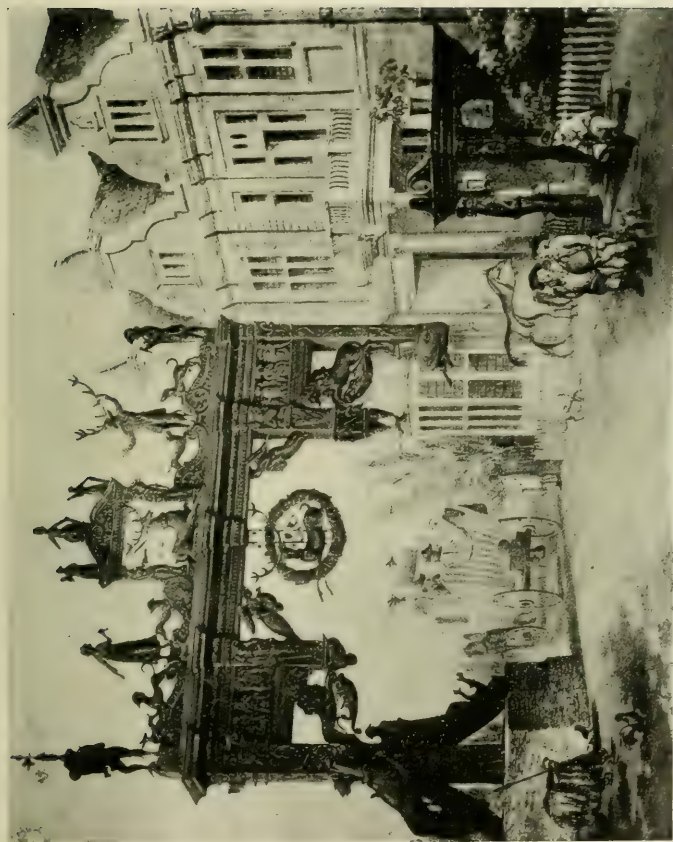
By this time stage-coaches were running all over England; they were springless, cumbrous affairs, with six horses to drag them through the sloughs; not luxurious

conveyances to our degenerate notions, yet a contemporary writer, Sir William Dugdale, inveighed against them. "They contracted," he averred, "an idle habit of body in passengers, who became idle and listless, unable to travel on horseback, endure frost and cold, or to lodge in the fields"—so hardy were our forefathers!

To meet the need of coach passengers, inns more or less commodious were built at intervals along frequented roads. One, a noted hostelry, still stands at Scole, not many miles distant from Wortham. It was built in 1655 by John Peck, a merchant of Norwich, and in 1687 was purchased by James Betts, brother of George of Wortham. James had prospered greatly, and, since 1673, had been steadily buying lands in Diss, Scole, and Palgrave.

The village of Scole or Osmondeston lies at the junction of four high roads, and Scole Inn became a far-famed stopping-place. The huge fireplace in the kitchen was then capable of roasting seventeen joints at once, and to this day, it is enclosed by ancient high-back settles, to seat a score or so of frozen travellers; and the house also possessed an enormous round bed in which forty people could sleep at a time.

But the great glory of the inn was its "Sumptuous sign." It took the shape of an arch spanning the road, and was the work of a wood-carver John Fairchild, who in 1655 had received for it no less a sum than £1057 of the then money. "After the first setting it up, there was a great resort of company to see it," says a traveller of 1681; it was carved all over with coats-of-arms, and twenty-five life-sized allegorical figures; over the centre was the figure of an astronomer seated on a globe, so constructed that in



"YE SIGN OF YE WHITE HART AT SCHOALE INN," BUILT IN 1655  
*Engraved by Joshua Kirby in 1740*





fine weather he faced north, but on stormy days turned to the prevailing wind ; on one side Jonah struggled out of the mouth of a grotesque whale, and on the other Charon with the help of Cerberus was ferrying a witch to hell.

At the time the inn sign was erected, the first great persecution of witches had but just spent itself. "Of all superstitions," says a modern writer, "perhaps the most preposterous was the notion that an imbecile hag, who, as Charles Lamb put it, hides from the constable and trembles before the beadle, could summon Beelzebub to her councils, and wield preter-human powers by the co-operation of Satan." A case of witchcraft occurred at Hoxne close to Wortham, the poor victim being tormented until she confessed the unimaginable horrors of a brain distraught. Under the same treatment, a certain Widow Chambers confessed that she had by her witchcraft killed the Lady Bloys, though everybody was convinced she had died a natural death. This Lady Bloys was the wife of the Sir William, who, it will be remembered, was eulogised in Thomas Deye's letter, as a "sober and worthy gent." During the first persecution no less than forty reputed witches were hanged in one year, in the town of Bury St Edmunds, but a champion was to be raised up.

About 1686, the Bacon estate in Redgrave was sold to Lord Chief Justice Sir John Holt. This enlightened judge saved the life of many a wretched old woman. With this object he, even when presiding at the King's Bench, did not hesitate to proclaim a folly of his own young days.

During a trial, the "powerful spell" of an accused

witch—some words written on parchment—was brought into court. This the prisoner confessed had been given originally to her, to cure her child of ague, and that it had since cured many others. The judge examined the parchment, and then addressed himself to the jury thus : —“ Thirty years ago,” he said, “ I and some companions as thoughtless as myself, went to this woman’s dwelling, then a public-house, and after enjoying, found we had no means to discharge the reckoning. I had recourse to a stratagem. Observing a child ill of an ague, I pretended I had a spell to cure it, and wrote the classic line you see on that parchment before you. I was discharged the demand on me, by the gratitude of this poor woman for the supposed benefit. Nature did much for the sick child, imagination the rest. This incident,” he continued, “ but ill suits my present character and station ; but to conceal it would be to aggravate the folly for which it becomes me to atone—to endanger innocence and countenance superstition.”

In 1688 died Daniel Betts “singleman.” His will, proved by his brothers George of Wortham and John of Diss, left his land between “ his cozens ” George, Edmund, and Elizabeth, children of George Betts. To “ his cozens,” James, Rebecca, and Mary, children of his brother James, he left forty pounds each. Legacies also were left to Prudence, widow of his brother Hillary, late of Norwich, and to her children Mary and John Betts, and his sister Rose Moore, widow.

The same year, the death took place of the uncle, after whom Daniel Betts had been named, Daniel Fulcher, owner of land both in Wortham and Diss. The initials of Thomas brother of Daniel Fulcher, carved in 1634, can

still be seen on the wood panelling which he then gave to Yaxley Church.

A wedding was the next event in the Betts family ; Rebecca eldest daughter of James Betts, marrying Robert second son of Thomas Seaborn of Wymondham in Norfolk. Of this alliance a curious relic survives in a leather bound note-book which originally belonged to the bridegroom's brother James Seaborn, whose name is inside the cover.

In this book, James Seaborn, aged seventeen, kept account of : " My bills since I went to Cambridge " ; they amounted for the term ending Midsummer 1685 to £11, 8s. 6d.

This included his initial expenses for gown, cap, and surplice, of which the heaviest items were eight yards of calimanco and velvet for his gown. His bedmaker was well content with four shillings the term, his barber's charge was half a crown, and " the landresse " was satisfied with twice that sum.

Young James had gained a scholarship which brought him one pound six shillings a term, and he must also have had an allowance from his father, though it is not entered ; for " Commons " cost him £2, 19s. 11d., sizings ten shillings, and tuition a pound. From Christmas to Lady Day, coals and candles came, the one to two shillings and twopence, and the other to two shillings ; the rent for chambers was thirteen shillings and four pence. Stockings were a heavy item, the price of the ordinary woollen or cotton was five shillings, but silk cost as much as twelve shillings a pair. Window-mending was a constant expense, and once a fine of six shillings was exacted for punishment.

In 1689 James Seaborn left Cambridge for London to study law. There he boarded with one " Mis Wheeler "

for the weekly sum of four shillings and two pence. Over his door he put "a coat of arms blazon," and in consequence of thus setting forth his social degree, he had to pay as much as a guinea for "poll money," a graduated tax which had been imposed the year before. Mum, a kind of ale made from wheat, was his favourite drink, of which he got half a barrel at a time for private consumption; he was a member of an Inn of Court or Chancery and dined in Hall, for which entertainment he paid eighteen shillings, and "to ye servants of ye Inn" three shillings and sixpence.

Our young gentleman carefully set down the price of "materials for making a coat and waistcoat" as under:—

|  | £. | s.  | d. |
|--|----|-----|----|
| 2 yards and a quarter of cloth .         | 1. | 17. | 0. |
| 5 yards of Tabrine . . . .               | 1. | 13. | 0. |
| 2 yards and a quarter of rich damask     | 1. | 7.  | 0. |
| 1 yard and a half Pertian .              | 0. | 7.  | 0. |
| 9 yards of Pantins . . . .               | 0. | 18. | 0. |
| 7 doz. & $\frac{1}{2}$ of coat buttons . | 0. | 5.  | 0. |
| 1 yard & 3 quarters of lace .            | 0. | 18. | 0. |

These items come to seven pounds five shillings, a goodly sum, at the then value of money, for materials only of a coat and waistcoat.

Certain indispensable accessories without which his costume would be incomplete James had also to purchase: a sword at eight shillings and a periwig at one pound five. A morning gown and a silk cap came to fifteen shillings and sixpence. A neckcloth and a pair of buckles which together amounted to two shillings and nine pence, and an ivory comb and a seal had to be added.



In 1691, James Seaborn "agreed with Mr Baugh for the hire of a chamber at seven pounds a year"; but he was not destined to occupy it long, for the Wymondham parish registers record against 8th July of the same year: "James Seaborn gent. died at London the second day and was buried in the parish church of Wymondham the eight day." A mural tablet there preserves the pious memory of his twenty-three years, and that of his parents who had both predeceased him in 1690.

The last year of James Seaborn's studies in Cambridge had coincided with the most peaceful revolution ever seen in England. The King and Queen with the infant Prince of Wales fled from an invader without striking a blow, and William and Mary reigned in their stead.

Archbishop Sancroft, though he had boldly withstood King James in the days of his power, would not now consent to break his oath of allegiance to the Royal exile, nor would he allow his chaplains, who disagreed with him, to read prayers in Lambeth Chapel for King William and Queen Mary. He also refused to perform the coronation ceremony, his place being filled by the Bishop of London.

However, such was the respect he inspired, that for three years the new sovereigns, who had—the Queen in especial—an affectionate regard for him, allowed him to continue as titular Archbishop at Lambeth. After the battle of the Boyne, however (though the calumnies then directed against the non-juring archbishop and bishops had been publicly refuted by them), Dr Tillotson was nominated to the Primacy in his place.

In 1691, the revenues of the archbishopric being "stopped," Sancroft "lessened half his family," and told



his chaplains that "the time had come when they must part, as it would make them invidious, and it might be dangerous, for them to serve him." Mr Needham made answer "that tho' he differed with the Archbishop in opinion concerning State affairs, yet as to personal duties in attending on His Grace, he feared no dangers that might happen to him at any time or place; and he believed his brother Wharton was of the same opinion;" to which Mr Wharton agreeing, the good old archbishop with vivacity in his looks replied, "Will you so, then go on in God's name."

Archbishop Sancroft in the days of his prosperity had been compared by his contemporary Dryden to—

"Zadoc the priest, whom shunning power and place  
His lowly mind advanced to David's grace."

And now, when deprived of all Royal favour and of his princely archiepiscopal revenue, the unworldly prelate could still smile, and say "Well, I can live on fifty pounds a year," which was the whole of his private income.

## CHAPTER XV

1691-1693

THE "FLOWER-POT PLOT"—CORRESPONDENCE OF  
ARCHBISHOP SANCROFT

**I**T must be remembered that in the preceding reign many infamous pretended plots had been invented (notably one by Titus Oates, who gained a pension of twelve hundred a year by his perjuries), blameless lives and noble reputations being thus mercilessly "done to death by slanderous tongues." And now covert accusations and open abuse had been directed against the non-jurors, who were dubbed "the Holy Lambeth Club," and the "Holy Jacobite Club," in a lately published pamphlet.

Not without reason therefore was it that the archbishop, who knew himself to be suspected of favouring the return of King James, inflexible as he was as regards his religion and his duty, was timidly apprehensive of spies and false witnesses.

Evidently distrusting his memory, and with a view to his defence, should defence be one day required of him, he penned the following statement, cautiously suppressing names, soon after his ejection from Lambeth :—

"I was, just before, driven from my own house, there being in the hands of the Sheriff of Surrey an attachment to seize me, and carry me to prison etc. :—hereupon,

between 8 and 9 o'clock in the evening, I suddenly put over to the Temple, into a house which I was told I might have entirely to myself, but found it otherwise ; I had only two little chambers, the people of the house stayed there still. There was an Irish gentleman lodged above, and an English gentleman below me (one, as I after understood, quite otherwise persuaded than I am), and all these were strangers to me. On the other side of a little alley, just against the door of this house, was the shop of a barber (a violent bigot) from the windows of whose house they might look through and through my little rooms.

“ When the gentleman came first to me and told me his errand, I told him all this ; and besides I had reason to think there were eyes and spies upon me and upon those that should come to see me, who I therefore kept from me as much as I could ; so that though he had been welcomed to me at my own house, I could not without pain see him where we were, both for his sake and mine own, there being at that time many under sharp persecution upon that same occasion.

“ He showed me in an old kind of scroll, three or four lines written without any address or subscription as I remember, asking me if I knew the hand, intending it I suppose for his credentials ; I said I did not know, but it might be as he affirmed, but did not know it was so ; he asked me if I durst not trust him, for in truth all resolved into that. It was not fit to say I did not, but I answered however, in my circumstances I am very unfit to enter into any business of this nature, for I every hour expected a new attachment directed to the Sheriff of Middlesex to seize me, and therefore resolved forth-

with to leave the city, and go almost a hundred miles off, into the deepest retirement I could find. He then desired me to recommend him to some with whom he might negotiate. I told him that my most intimate friends and relations were out of town (it being the great Vacation), and among the rest I had very little acquaintance, having for many years lived very retiredly; yet there was another who had been employed here before him, and (yes, said he, a clergyman, I hear), so that he would but act as agent, and others would be apt to think (as I declared I did) that if he was sent, it was to those of his own nation, many persons of which had been a little before for some time in town, but were newly gone home.

“ Before he came to me again, I spoke with that other person employed here before him, and told him the sum of the former conference; he was of the same opinion with me concerning that gentleman, that he had no commission to me, but perhaps to his own countrymen, and that not from the same persons with whom he corresponded, but some others of another party; but however, that in a letter which he would write the very next post, he would secure me from all misapprehension and misinterpretation, and encourage me to go on as I had begun. What he did herein I know not, nor can know, he being since dead. But by such time as that gentleman came to me the second time (which I would fain have avoided), I confess I did not trust him so far as I did before; and therefore, having expressed to him, how much I was in pain for him, lest he should be discovered and endangered in a place so frequented, I advised him to go northward etc.; and when he was very earnest with me over and over, to send a letter by him

to —— saying more than once that he would come to me again for it, and in fine that he would not go away without it ; I said that he was too importunate and pressed me too far, and desired him not to trouble himself any further.

“ What hideous representations he hath made of the conference elsewhere, I know not nor desire particularly to know, for what is before related is all, or at least the worst, of what passed.

“ I am apt to think that the gentleman made no great progress in his negotiation, and to ease himself would lay the blame of his miscarriage upon me, so it seems I had done more wisely and warily if I had not trusted him so far as I did.

“ When I had read over what I had written, I perceived I had omitted, upon the passage of the letter for which he had so warmly solicited me, that I had had for many years a great aversion from writing of letters, that perhaps scarce any person of my quality wrote so few as I do, and that he could not but have heard what horrid inconveniences a poor unhappy brother of mine had brought upon himself (upon me too and others) by such a letter ; in fine, that I had no affectation of the sort especially without manifest necessity, the wise Italians say “ *il cane riscaldato a paura ancora de l' acqua fredda* ” [The scalded dog fears even cold water], which, however, he thought he put into a safe conveyance.

“ In the letter which he desired, he urged me vehemently to set down what conditions and limitations I thought fit for the bringing about a great event, and he would undertake etc. I had this in horror, and said it was a proposal so improper and impracticable for me (there must be



persons very numerous and most eminent that must go about it), I could not believe he had commission to offer it to me, and here we broke off, and I would hear no more."

Archbishop Sancroft was never driven to make use of this document to vindicate himself, but was allowed to retire in peace to his native village, Fressingfield in Suffolk. Mr Needham wished to accompany him, but the Archbishop said "his house was too strait, and that in future he must be his own chaplain." Needham, however, continued to visit his revered master, probably from the house of his sister Catherine, now Mrs Samuel Shuckforth, at Botesdale, a neighbouring village to Wortham.

During the spring of 1691, while the blameless archbishop was enjoying his peaceful retirement at Fressingfield, three low wretches then imprisoned for fraud in Newgate were engaged in concocting a plot, of such audacity and villainy that had it been successful, it would certainly have disgraced the venerable prelate, and might even have cost him his life.

The prime mover in this dastardly attempt was one Robert Young, who had begun his career by forging letters and testimonials from the Archbishop of Cashel and the Bishop of Waterford, calculated to induce the Bishop of Killaloe to ordain him deacon. Later, the man had been degraded from his orders thus fraudulently obtained, by the Bishop of Kilmore, and tried for bigamy. In 1683, he fled to England, and exhibited to Archbishop Sancroft orders, which he had counterfeited, purporting to be from the Bishop of Clogher, and in the character of a distressed Irish clergyman begged him to provide him

with employment. Sancroft refused, after inquiries made in Ireland, saying, "He had no cure void in his gift."

In 1684, after a series of forgeries, Young and his wife were tried at Bury St Edmunds for exhibiting a false testimonial from the archbishop, and sentenced to stand in the pillory. But as he still carried on the trade of begging under Sancroft's name, the archbishop in 1687 inserted warning advertisements in the *Gazette*—being advised from "divers quarters that his hand and seal went abegging throughout the Kingdom."

Young, while at Bury, had been heard to say "it will not be long before the Archbishop's head is off"; and when King Charles' death was reported in February 1684, he had cried:—"Is the King dead? then have at the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Of Young's two accomplices, one, Captain Lawe, had been a prisoner in Newgate till 1691. The other, Stephen Blackhead, who had also been a prisoner there, was a broken tailor; he had been condemned to lose his ears, but escaped by delivering up some bills and letters.

With the help of these two villains, Robert Young forged "a paper of Association," counterfeiting the signatures of Archbishop Sancroft, the Earl of Marlborough, Spratt bishop of Rochester, and four others, by which they were to undertake to assist King James in the recovery of his kingdoms with 30,000 armed men; to deliver the Tower into his hands; and seize on the person of the Princess of Orange dead or alive.

And this forged paper Blackhead was commissioned to hide in the house of the Bishop of Rochester at Bromley.

The time chosen for this was a moment of panic.

"The English fleet was scarce out of the river," says Bishop Spratt in his "Relation" of the plot; "the Dutch for the most part at home; the French in the mouth of the Channel, only kept back by contrary winds; a terrible invasion hourly expected from France; the army beyond the seas, which should have defended us. How very little evidence would have sufficed to ruin any man who had been accused with the least probability of truth."

Bishop Spratt of Rochester had sat on the Ecclesiastical Commission illegally instituted by King James in 1686, and was thus the more liable to suspicion, a fact taken into consideration by the crafty scoundrel Young.

The plot began to work on the 7th May 1692, when the bishop was arrested on the charge of high treason; his house was searched; but as nothing treasonable was found, he was after a few days released.

The following letter written by William Needham "to Mr. Francis Nicols at Mr. Sancroft's house in Fressingfield" relates the events which followed:—

"You best know my Lord Grace's moments of leisure, and may most conveniently present to him (with the heartiest render of my most humble duty) this large account of a terrible design against himself, as well as my Lord Bishop of Rochester (and many other noble persons) which has been very freely and providentially laid open by what has happened to my Lord Bishop of Rochester within a few days. The particulars as follows, according to the best of my memory, who received them yesterday from his Lordship's own mouth, whilst they were yet fresh in his thoughts; and he also (with most cordial respects to His Grace) desires that my Lord

might know how much danger has hung over them by the villainy of some profligate (if not prostitute) wretches.

“ When my Lord Bishop’s guards were taken off (on Friday night in Whitsun week as I remember) he thought he had been free both from trouble and suspicion ; but as he was coming to town from Bromley on Thursday last, he met with a letter from my Lord Nottingham, requiring him to appear before the Council the next day. He thought fit to go to his Lordship immediately after he got to town, hoping to give him satisfaction so quickly as that he might have returned that evening as he had intended ; but he was bid to appear according to order, and told by Lord Nottingham that he did not enter into discourse with him till he had heard further from one man.

“ The Bishop appeared accordingly, and was charged with corresponding with one Young (a name surmised to have been assumed by Lord Marlborough during his surmised secret management of this plot) which startled his Lordship, he not knowing any one of that name, from whom he had received any letter, excepting one he received once out of Newgate from one Robert Young pretending to be a clergyman, in which he desired him to recollect that he had for some weeks officiated in the college at Bromley at the chaplain’s request, and preached once or twice before his Lordship ; to which letter my Lord Bishop said he returned only a verbal answer refusing his testimonial as not remembering the person and having found upon enquiry that he had indeed officiated at the college, but was reported a very idle man, and his wife a worse woman ; and excepting this passage, he disowned all correspondence with Young.



“ Hereupon, a man was called in, and it was demanded whether the Lord Bishop knew him, and he answered he had seen him at his house at Bromley.

“ This fellow affirmed that he had carried a letter from Young to the Lord Bishop, and an answer to Young written by the Bishop's own hand, and that, within such a time (I forget but it was some few months).

“ My Lord Bishop happily recollected the time, and the occasion of this man coming to his house, and being well assured his memory did not fail him, charged him very positively and solemnly with the truth which was this:—This man brought him a letter from a D.D. in Buckinghamshire whom he represented to be his Master. The letter was an enquiry after one who had (as the Dr. supposed) forged letters of orders from the Bishop of Rochester. Upon the receipt of it he searched his keys, found the suspicion just, and wrote to the Dr. commending his honest zeal, and desiring him to get the counterfeit punished; that this happened on a Fast day, upon which account my Lord Bishop bade the bearer then, and now the informant, to stay till after evening prayer; and gave order to his servants to entertain him kindly at supper, which was accordingly done. The truth of which he pressed so hard upon the fellow with questions, that he was plainly disordered in his looks; though he would not acknowledge what my Lord Bishop said, he persisted that he never carried any letter to him but from Young.

“ The Bishop told the Lords, that this man and his business were very well known in his family, and that he was sure some of his servants must be able to inform their Lordships and to confirm what he had told them.



“It happened well, that the Bishops secretary Mr. More, waited upon him at Whitehall, and observing this man (Blackhead is his name) to be walking in the chamber before the Council door and afterwards called in, recollected where and upon what occasion he first came to know that man, whose face he well remembered, but found that he (Blackhead) was not willing to take notice of him.

“The Council called Mr. More in, who being interrogated, very readily gave the same account of Blackhead which his Lord had given, adding that he brought a letter from one Dr. Hooks (whose name the Bishop said he could not remember, but upon hearing his secretary name it, he said he had well refreshed his memory, and that that or one very like it, was the name of the Dr.) which letter he had still by him amongst his papers at Bromley.

“This filled the wretch with confusion, especially when it was added, that the same man came again with thanks from his Master, for the assistance my Lord had given him, and so acquainting his Lordship that they were bringing the counterfeit to London for punishment.

“Upon this, the Bishop and his secretary were bid to withdraw, and after a little time my Lord Somerset came to the Bishop, and told him they had detected a great piece of villainy, and were convinced of his Lordship's innocence, who was soon after called in again and kindly saluted by the Lords, who were all abundantly satisfied with what had passed towards the discovery of so black a design. This passed on Friday.

“When my Lord Bishop came at Bromley, he bade Mr. More find out the letter from Hooks, which he quickly

did ; he enquired of the man's behaviour at his second coming, and found that he had seen the rooms of the house, and out of an odd sort of curiosity would fain have seen his study ; alleging that his Mr. (the Dr.) had a very fine one, and that he (Blackhead) had shown it to strangers ; but the butler replied, that his Lord's books were chiefly at Westminster, and by good providence did not let him in, though he desired only to see the room.

“ He learned further from his servants, that the same man had been there again on Whitsunday, saying that business had brought him to Greenwich, where hearing of the Bishop's troubles (he was then under confinement at Westminster) he could not forbear coming to condole with them ; but he was got into the middle of the house without ever knocking at the door, which, together with such a slender pretence, gave the Lord Bishop (upon the information given him by his servants) a jealousy of some design ; whereupon he resolved to lay the letter from Hooks before the Council, and to give them a full account of these particulars concerning Blackhead, and to have his servants ready with him, to prove them by oath if required. And to this end he did accordingly wait upon them at Council yesterday, and found the event of it very surprising.

“ Blackhead was examined concerning his desire to see the Lord Bishop's study, and charged with bringing him a letter from Hooks ; he denied it, saying he only brought a letter from Young ; but upon admonitions given him to deal truly, and upon reminding him of the particulars of his discourse with the butler, he confessed the truth, owning that it had been told them by the Lord Bishop ; and being asked for what end he

would have gone into the study, he owned it was to have left a paper there, which he afterwards did leave in a flower pot in the parlour, and that his business on Whitsunday was to retrieve that paper, which he did ; Young, who employed him, telling him that it was an original and that he would do nothing without it.

“ Hereupon, the Lords told the Bishop, that Young had informed them that the Lord Bishop had in his custody an association for bringing in K.J. signed by several great persons ; which when he was abroad he constantly carried with him, but was so very cautious, that at his coming home he used to hide it in a flower pot, and had therefore given the messenger instructions to be sure to search the flower pots, as well as to shake all his books, which the messenger did with great diligence ; the ransacking the flower pots looking like a jest, till now that the reason of it appears.

“ But by great providence, the messenger who took my Lord into custody, was not informed of two parlours at Bromley, and so having missed of the paper by searching the flower pots in the wrong rooms, made it necessary for Blackhead to fetch it again on Whitsunday.

“ The paper was an Association (now in the hands of the Council) by the villains for proof upon . . . subscribed by our most honoured Lord, by Lord Marlborough, Earl of Salisbury, Bishop of Rochester, Sir Basil Firebrace (and I think my Lord Bishop said some others) all whose hands were so exactly counterfeited, that the Bishop said his own was so very accurately done, that had he not been sure of never having done the thing he could not have ventured to disown it, and my Lord Godolphin was pleased to say that he knew my Lord

Archbishop of Canterbury Sancroft's hand so well that he thought it was more artificially done than the other.

"After this, their Lordships confronted Young with the confessing Blackhead, but he is hard enough to persist still ; disowns all that Blackhead says concerning him, and had impudence enough to say to the Lords, that for aught he knew this Blackhead was suborned by the Bishop against him. He boldly asked the Bishop if he did not know Captain Lawes, and told him he would make a portent business of it ; but the Bishop refusing to reply to a question of his, thought fit to give (as he did) full satisfaction to the Council that he knew no such man ; and leaving them to search into the bottom of this dark design, took his leave. And whilst I stayed at hand amongst some others to receive these particulars from my Lord Bishop, one came in from Whitehall, and told us that the Council had ordered the Attorney General to prosecute the villains immediately.

"God preserve His Grace from all his and God's enemies.

"I am . . . to serve you.

"WILLIAM NEEDHAM.

"I forgot to tell you that the Lord Camarthen (sic) observed that the letter which was signed Hooks (sent by Young) was written in the same hand with the Association, which evidently appeared to the Lords upon a full comparison of them. This Young is said to have laid long in Newgate for forging a bond, and to have been lately set at liberty, it seems he is rogue enough to find friends at a critical season."



The Bishop of Rochester had undertaken to write a "Relation of the contrivances of Blackhead and Young." The archbishop had by him several papers concerning Young's "former pranks," and Bishop Spratt now asked permission to make use of them. Here follows the bishop's letter :—

"BROMLEY, *July 8th*  
1692.

"May it please Your Grace

"I can never be sufficiently thankful to Almighty God that in his gracious providence he has made me in some sort the poor instrument of discovering this villainous design against Your Grace and so many other innocent persons as well as myself. I will not now trouble Your Grace with all the particulars both because I desired Mr Needham to acquaint Your Grace with the substance of what passed, and also because I am advised by divers worthy and great persons to draw up a brief account of the whole business, which when it is done shall be communicated to Your Grace ; only now give me leave to tell Your Grace that the forged association besides Your Grace's name (so well counterfeited that I believe it would have puzzled your chaplain to distinguish), and mine (so exactly imitated that perhaps it would have deceived my wife), and the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Marlborough, the Lord Cornburies, and Sir Basil Firebrace, all of them very like, as is said by those who know their writing. At the bottom of the paper is put the name of one Wilcox, who they tell me is in Holy Orders, who it seems has been some time in Newgate, and I have heard a very ill character of him and that he was either deprived or prosecuted by Bishop Lloyd of



Norwich ; so had doubtless the other wicked persons put his name into such company, in hope that to get out of prison and atone for his former crimes he would be induced to confess anything.

“ Now my Lord I have already with as much earnestness as became me, pressed the Lords that this diabolical contrivance may be searched into the bottom, and that the conspirators already discovered, especially Young and his wife, may be brought to condign punishment ; and they have solemnly promised me it shall be done, particularly the last time I was to solicit my Lord of Nottingham about it. He assured me the prosecution was only delayed till the King's council should determine whether it would reach Young's ears or his life ; that for his part he thought it would touch his life, and if it did, there should be no mercy on him ; adding words to this purpose, that such villains were the enemies of mankind and as dangerous as mad dogs, and ought so to be treated as far as the law will give leave.

“ I humbly thank your Grace I had lately a sight of some papers in Mr Needham's hands relating to Young's former practices upon your Grace, but it was with this condition that they should not be so used as to involve your Grace in any prosecution of the Council on that account ; that my Lord, I pass my word you shall not need to fear ; yet I beseech you give me leave with all respect to represent to your Grace my poor judgement that it will be absolutely necessary these papers should be produced, because they cannot but entirely confound Young, whose former pranks without this witness we cannot so well set forth, and especially since the miscreant does still persist in denying this last forgery, and

after he was undeniably convicted before the whole Cabinet Council, he still had the unparalleled impudence to threaten Your Grace and me and the rest with a Parliament. In truth my Lord, I have already under a promise of secrecy read two or three of these papers to my Lord Rochester (*sic*), who is absolutely of my opinion that your Grace should be prevailed with to permit that they be shown, and if need be published. I do therefore again most earnestly entreat your Grace to trust me the use and disposal of them, and I will take as much care as for my own life that your Grace shall not be concerned or disturbed with any journey on that pretence. It will be enough if you shall please to write two or three lines to me, that your Grace has consigned into my hands the papers you sent to Mr Needham, relating to Young the falsary.

“ I should also take it for a great favour if your Grace would send me a short narrative of the beginning, discovery, and success of that forgery ; for this last I do not find sufficiently expressed in those papers, whether he was tried and punished at Bury or no : or how he got free, and thereby to have opportunities to commit so many other enormities since the year 87, since which year I have traced out many other footsteps of the like villianies practised by him and his wife.

“ I beseech your Grace to pardon my importunity in this affair, and give me leave to add I do with some impatience long for your Grace’s answer, that you have given up these papers to my poor discretion.

“ I pray God in Heaven still to preserve your Grace as being your Grace’s most humble, most faithful, most obedient servant

“ THO : ROFFEN.”

In his next letter, Bishop Spratt asks further that the archbishop would give him a narrative of the time "wherein Young played the knave with your Grace," and assures Sancroft that he will use the papers already sent, "so as your Grace shall not complain I have transgressed your instructions." He adds "the other rascal Blackhead has made his escape, or has had his escape made for him."

In answer, Sancroft forwarded papers relating the former villainies of Young to William Needham, who "perused them and sent four of them to my Lord Bishop."

In a letter dated from Alresford, 28th October 1692, Needham informs the Archbishop that Bishop Spratt had shown the first part of his "Relation" to Lord Nottingham, who "upon perusal found reason to alter only one word, . . . he afterwards gave direction to Mr. Bohun<sup>1</sup> to put an imprimatur on it, my Lord Bishop means to speed the publication of it as much as may be, he has also finished the second part, he means it shall quickly follow the first."

By April of the year following, both parts had been published, and Sancroft writes to send "heartly thanks" to Bishop Spratt, "for your two exact relations," and thanks him for the part he played in his deliverance from the plot:—

"The ever waking Providence of a most gracious God," wrote the aged Archbishop, "was pleased lately not only . . . but also to make use of the ready mind, quick wit, and steady memory, wherewith He hath so eminently blessed you, as an instrument to

<sup>1</sup> This Suffolk gentleman whose diary has already been referred to was Licenser of the Press.

deliver me (with yourself) from a most dreadful ruin, which hung black o'er my head, when I dreamt not of it; for had the cursed association been found in the flower pot (t'is next to a wonder it was not), or had you made a weak defence, my quarters here had been beaten up too, and my study ransacked by messengers and soldiers, and I myself hurried up to London, so that notwithstanding my innocence, the very journey, the attendance and the imprisonment would probably effectually have destroyed me without any further prosecution. But blessed be God, the soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken and we are delivered. The remainder of my life is much too little to express my thankfulness to God."

Bishop Spratt in his answering letter, assures the archbishop that—"After the happy and wonderful deliverance from that villainous design, I have always esteemed it the greatest argument of the Divine goodness to me that I was in some sort made the poor instrument of your Grace's preservation."

The Bishop of Rochester ever after commemorated his deliverance by a yearly day of thanksgiving.

Though made use of by Bishop Spratt in 1692 as a basis to expose the "Flower pot plot," these interesting letters have never till now been published in their entirety.<sup>1</sup>

Archbishop Sancroft died at Fressingfield in November 1693.

"You and I," he said to William Needham, in their

<sup>1</sup> The original letters for generations treasured at Wortham have been lost; but fortunately they were copied some years ago by Mr Sancroft Holmes, a collateral descendant of Archbishop Sancroft, though the original spelling was not preserved. Mr Sancroft Holmes has most kindly allowed me to make use of his copies.



last interview, "have gone different ways in these late affairs, but I trust heaven's gates are wide enough to receive us both."

The archbishop received the last sacrament from Dr Trumbull, a non-juror who came there accidentally the day before his death. He had intended to receive it from another non-juror, Mr. Edwards the ejected minister of Eye.

Mr Edwards' signature is in the ancient Wortham copy book close by that of "Edmundus Betts"; he was most likely tutor to the boys George and Edmund Betts, before they went to Bury school.

The town of Eye had remained loyal to King James, and forfeited its charter in 1696, on the refusal or neglect of the Bailiffs and Burgesses to subscribe to the Association for "the better serving" of King William.

The sympathies of the rector of Wortham-Jarvis, Thomas Thurlow, were also with King James. In the Bury records is the following entry concerning him: "Mr. Thomas Thurlow minister, stood in the Pillory for one hour at Bury, and was fined £200 for a seditious assembly on the Fast day at Buddesdale (Botesdale), and drinking confusion and damnation to King William and Queen Mary and prosperity to the French King."

There is among the Wortham collection a sermon against profane swearing, bound up with the Proclamation of King William which ordered all ministers to preach on that subject. The King had instituted fines against swearing, "which," said our preacher, "the common verily think so modish."

In spite—perhaps because of—sermons and fines, swearing continued fashionable. Some years later, Sarah,



Duchess of Marlborough, in quest of legal advice, is said to have visited an attorney's office, but found the man of law absent. The clerk who had received her, could not say who the visitor had been ; but told his master that he was quite certain she must be a lady of quality, because she swore so horribly.

## CHAPTER XVI

1696

GEORGE BETTS HUNTS "YE FFOXES"—BAITS FOR  
COARSE FISH

**T**HROUGH the Fulchers, his mother's people, George Betts was related to Philip Vincent of Marlingford, whose family like his own ranked with the smaller country gentry.

The Vincents, who had been seated at Marlingford, in Norfolk, since 1367, had in James I.'s reign given a wife to Gawdy Brampton of Blo-Norton Hall. Blo-Norton is close to Wortham, so that through this connection the Vincents would have been likely to see much of their cousins the Betts:—

In 1696 George wrote a letter directed:—

"Theis

ffor Mr Vincent att Marlingford

to be left at ye Goat in Norwich"

*"November ye 10th 1696*

"CUSON

"I had thoughts to have seene you and my Cosin at Wortham before yo<sup>r</sup> letter came to o<sup>r</sup> hands; but the season being now better then when you writ, wee should be glad of yo<sup>r</sup> company; for I want a companion to Hunt with me and my 4: Cupel doggs, the ffoxes

being so plentiful with us, that ye 4 : or 5 : last times  
I have gone out I have mett with a ffoxe.

“ So with our sarvis to you and all our relations remain

Yo<sup>r</sup> Louing Kinsman

to Command

GEO : BETTS

My Cosin ffulcher's dauter continues ill still.”

George Betts with his “ 4 cuppel doggs ” may lay claim to have been perhaps the earliest M.F.H. in Suffolk ; indeed Beckford says, fox-hunting as a sport hardly then existed in any part of England, foxes being considered mere vermin to be knocked on the head whenever caught :—

“ Though space and law the stag we lend  
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,  
Who ever reck'd where how or when  
The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain ? ”

And Reyce, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, says of the fox :—“ Where he marcheth he is infinitely pursued for his manifold robberies and murders.” At Wortham, however, poor Reynard was allowed the honours of war.<sup>1</sup>

On that November morning in 1696, before the sun had risen high enough to brighten the dewdrops on the gossamer, the veteran George Betts then in his seventy-third year, with his “ cuson ” Philip Vincent his junior by twenty years, rode out to trail up to “ ye ffoxe.”

See our two jolly old sportsmen in long skirted coats flapping on their horses' quarters, leather breeches, and long boots coming up over the knees. No dandies

<sup>1</sup> They seem to have been allowed for at least half a century. See “ Measures of Blowing,” *supra*, page 83, “ the death of foxe.”





*Fishing.*



they, but their ruddy faces shone with health and perfect content. The then fashionable long wigs, as likely to catch in thorns, would have been left at home, and silk caps, worn beneath small soft black hats, would alone cover their shaven pates.

A nondescript pack no doubt were the few "doggs" straggling at the horses' heels, and they would have been entered at all sort of game—deer, otter, badger, hare, as well as fox; yet they were cheered or rated by George Betts, and "cuson Philipp Vincent," his amateur whipper-in, in exactly the same dog language as that now employed by a twentieth-century huntsman to his perfect pack of highly bred fox-hounds.

Hunting was not the only sport which claimed George Betts' attention, he was fond of fishing also, and often gave his friends a day's sport:—"20th June: Samell Church and Cristep<sup>r</sup> Lond fish my watters and Musik and his sonne the week after." And in our sportsman's note-book are several directions how to twist fishing lines, and recipes in his handwriting for baits for coarse fish.

Here is one for paste: "Take the kidney tallow of a sheepe, or sheepes blood, and as much young cheese, and beat them in a mortar till they be of one body, and as much wheat flour as will make it exceeding stiffe, then before the fire alay the stiffness with life-honey, and this will last a yeare, and all fish will bite at it." A deadly mixture for anointing baits was "oyle of the Aspray, and coculus Indie, and Assafaetida beaten, and mix with as much life-honey, and dissolve them on the oyle of polypody, soe keepe it in a close glass, and when you angle, anoint the bait therewith and the fish will bite at all times."

## CHAPTER XVII

1682-1714

A MINISTER'S DIFFICULTIES—HIS DENUNCIATION OF "YE TYRANT OF FRANCE"—HEALING OF THE KING'S EVIL

**I**N a letter to Archbishop Sancroft written in 1692 William Needham had given him the talk of London:—"the castle of Namur is like to hold out yet awhile," and we have a subsequent sermon of his headed:—"Thanksgiving for the taking of Namur 22 September 1695."

By the fall of Namur, all fear of King James regaining a footing in England was at an end; though the death of Princess Anne's only son the Duke of Gloucester, opened, soon after, the unwelcome prospect of a Jacobite succession.

The Betts preserved at Wortham a series of letters and sermons noteworthy as showing what good reason the clergy of the Church of England had to dread such a contingency. The letters passed between the Rev. Theophilus Williams who has already been mentioned, then Rector of St Peter's, Thetford, Bishop Moore of Norwich, and Dr John Sharp, Dean of Norwich, who was later Archbishop of York.

The first letter, dated Oct. 2nd 1700, refers back to

King James II.'s reign and the subsequent time when Bishop Lloyd, Bishop Moore's predecessor and Sancroft's friend, was exiled from his see as a non-juror. The correspondence is too lengthy to transcribe here, but it shows that Mr Williams in 1682 had been threatened by the Mayor of Thetford, "to be had up to the High Commission (Ecclesiastical Commission) Court. The Mayor having turned papist," he writes, "and being my debtor for tythes, thought he could not pay an heretick priest any better way than by delivering him up to the tender mercies of the Court."

Dean Sharp had himself, in King James's reign, been suspended for preaching against Popery. The letters were sent by the hand of "my brother Burley."<sup>1</sup>

The Wortham sermons of Queen Anne's time supplement and succeed these letters, and give a vivid picture of events which materially affected the lives of the men and women of that generation. In one such sermon, preached by Mr Williams, pity for the Palatine Protestants oppressed by Louis of France, fear of a like fate for those of England, exultation at Marlborough's victories, and gratitude to Queen Anne for her discharge of the first fruits of poor livings, find each and all fitting expression.

"At this time," said the preacher, "a great and mighty prince, I mean the tyrant of France, bends his whole force to root out the Protestant name, as well as to usurp upon the liberty of Europe. What he has done

<sup>1</sup> Robert Burley of Wisbech was a brother-in-law of Theophilus Williams, and Burley's wife was sister to the 2nd Mrs Thomas Deye. Thus through the Deye family the letters and sermons came to their descendants the Betts, and also the Burley heraldic achievement which hung for over a century in the hall of Wortham.

in his own country and wherever his power and influence reached, I need not tell you : from some of his subjects he has forced away their faith ; others, to keep their faith, have lost their estates, their liberty and their lives, witness the Camiasars in his own country, and the poor distressed protestants in the Principality of Orange." And the preacher thus proceeds :—" Now should that mighty Monarch prevail against our English nation, and like an irresistible stream carry all before him, it is easy to conjecture what will become of Protestants ; but our hope and trust is in God, that the Christian faith will never be rooted out ; we have a good and gracious Queen at home, who is the honour and glory of it, and the joy and delight of her people. She has done such bountiful and charitable acts amongst her subjects and especially the poor clergy, that methinks this great and glorious victory seems to be a bountiful reward from heaven for that particular charitable act."

The discharge of the first fruits did not benefit any one of Mr Williams' three livings of Thetford, Bridgham and East Herling, nor the rectory of Wortham, for they were all above the prescribed value.

The victory the preacher referred to was the success of the Allies near Mons, for which the Queen had proclaimed a general thanksgiving.

As a result of the religious persecution by Louis XIV., a circular letter from Bishop Moore of Norwich was at this time read in Wortham church, exhorting the people to show kindness to the distressed Palatine Protestants who had taken refuge in Norfolk and Suffolk, and pointing out that in Queen Elizabeth's reign the Protestant refugees had, as the then (Elizabethan) Bishop Parkhurst







REBECCA, WIFE OF JAMES BETTS THE ELDER

pointed out, brought God's blessing with them. "Ye great dearth of men," the parson added, "to supply ye necessary occasions of soldiers and seamen has been such, that the very last harvest is a sufficient conviction of ye want of hands to carry on ye publick affairs."

John Betts, brother of George of Wortham, died in 1698, unmarried, leaving his lands to his eldest brother George who survived him, burdened with a small charge in favour of his nephew John, son of his late brother Hillary of Norwich.

In 1703, James Betts died; he devised his estates, which were considerable, in Palgrave, Diss, and Scole, to his wife Rebecca, who did not long survive him. After her death the lands went to their only son James, with remainder to the unmarried daughter Mary, Rebecca the eldest having been previously provided for on her marriage with Robert Seaborn. And the testator directed that the largest of his silver tankards should go down as an heirloom in the family.

Three tankards dated 1668, 1674, and 1677, were sold at the Betts sale in 1906 for £180, £125, and £100 respectively. The last in date was probably the heirloom, as it was the largest.

In a list of house linen owned by James, pillow-cases, though now no longer made of cloth, are still described as "pillow beeres."

James Betts the younger died shortly after his father, leaving two children, James and Mary. His sisters, Rebecca Seaborn now a widow and Mary Betts, settled at Wymondham. The distant Scole estate (including the famous inn), which on her brother's death had passed

to Mary under her father's will, was managed for her by her young cousin Edmund, younger son of George Betts of Wortham.

Edmund's accounts, which date from 1711, of the money he received and spent for "Coz Mary Betts," are entered in the note-book which had formerly belonged to James Seaborn undergraduate and student at law. Edmund farmed as well, a farm, his own property, at Costessy in Norfolk.

Among the notes made by this young man in the days of Queen Anne is an entry, interesting as showing how little progress the science of medicine had made since Dr John Bettys wrote his recipes for "medecins" in the early years of the reign of Henry VIII.

"To cure the Biting of a Mad Dog," Edmund Betts in 1712 gives this prescription: "Take of ye leaves of Rue, picked from ye stalks and bruised, 6 ounces; garlick picked from ye stalk and bruised; Venice Treacle or Mithridates; ye scrapings of Pewter; of each 4 ounces: boyl all these over a small fire in 2 Quarts of strong ale, till one pint be consumed, then keep it in a Bottle close stopped, and give of it 9 Spoonfulls to a Man or Woman, warm, 7 mornings together fasting, and 6 to a Dog, and apply some of the Ingredients from which ye Liquor was strained to the bitten place. This receipt was taken out of Calthorpe church in Lincolnshire, where many in ye Town were bitten by a Mad Dog, and all that took ye Medecine did well, and ye rest died mad, and ye same Medecine is hung up in Bradford Church in Wiltshire, where its efficacy had been approved on the Like Occasion!"

On "March 1st 1714-15" Edmund Betts wrote:

“ My mother lent Coz Mary Betts ye piece of toucht gold  
with ye Britaine and this motto on one side

Gloria Soli Deo

and on the other ye ship with this motto

Anna : D;G: M: B; R:

Æ: E†: H: Reg:

Received it back 28 June 1715.”

The rubric of the service in the Queen Anne prayer books, for healing the King's Evil, directs that as every infirm person is presented, the Queen laying her hand upon them, shall put the gold with which she has touched the sore about their necks, while the chaplain pronounces a blessing. “ Ye piece of toucht gold,” without the personal healing touch, however, failed to cure “ Coz Mary Betts ; her death coincided with its return on 28th of June 1715. This identical piece of “ toucht gold ” remained at Wortham until 1906.

Since Edward the Confessor, who is reputed to have been the first English King to heal the evil, the only sovereign up to Anne's time who refused to touch was sensible Dutch William ; and he, instead, used to wish his applicants “ better health and more sense.” That it was during the Stuart period, generally believed that the King could heal scrofula, is shown by a public notice given by Charles II. on May 18th 1664, stating that it was “ his royal will and pleasure to continue the healing of his people for the Evil during the month of May, and then give over till Michelmas next.”

George Betts died in February 1714, aged 90, and in the chancel of Wortham Church lies a black marble

slab to his memory. Within two years of his death his signature appears as firm as ever, as one of the two justices who allowed a rate made by the Wortham overseers. Born in the last year of the reign of James I., he had lived through a Civil War; witnessed the beheading of a King; endured the rule of Cromwell; greeted the Restoration; and heard with amazement of the ignominious flight of the second King James. He had followed the details of William III.'s struggle with Louis of France, and rejoiced later over the victories of Marlborough. With due decorum, he had listened to the Wortham parson's sermon on "the Union of England and Scotland," preached upon the text, hardly an encouraging one, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

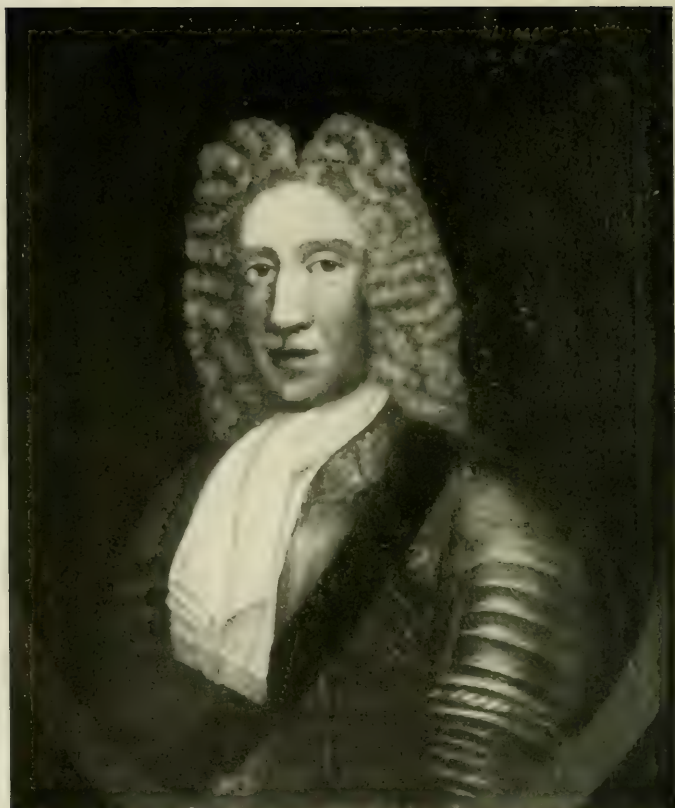
The last year of his life had seen the end of the long war, and the Treaty of Utrecht; he died only a few months before the death of the placid, prosperous Queen, the fifth sovereign, and sixth ruler of England, since his advent into a changeful, troublous world.

Susanna his wife survived him, as did his two sons, George and Edmund. His only daughter Elizabeth had died eight years before, in 1706. A tombstone in Wortham Church thus records her twenty-eight harmless years :

"Vertu and piety in her youth did Joyne  
To make her for her God a soule deuine."







PORTRAIT FROM WORTHAM BELIEVED TO REPRESENT GARDINER COLBY

## CHAPTER XVIII

1715-1727

THE FIRST JACOBITE RISING—CHILDREN'S HOROSCOPES  
—WEARING OF CALICO FORBIDDEN

**T**HE year after the death of the venerable George Betts, the following entry was made in the registers of Marlingford Church :—

“ May 10th    Edmund Betts of Wortham in Suffolk,  
1715           single, and Abigail Vincent of Marling-  
                  ford, single, were married.”

Abigail was a daughter of Philip Vincent, George Betts' cousin and old hunting companion, by his second wife Elizabeth Colby. The ancient coat-of-arms of Colby impaled with Vincent appears on some of the Betts silver ; and there is a seal-top spoon of 1667, engraved with the name of “ Gardiner Colby.” Abigail's half-sister Elizabeth Vincent, had eight years previously married “ Nathaniel Life Esqr. of Swaffham in Norfolk.”

A few months after the marriage of Edmund Betts, the Pretender made his first futile attempt on the English throne, and the fiery though now aged Theophilus Williams was to the fore as usual with a sermon on the subject. He spoke of “ that perfidious crew, who took the oaths to King George, with a full intent to sacrifice

him and his government to their wicked purpose of bringing us into slavery and popish darkness." And he quoted "a very sweet and pious composure" by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his suffragans, expressing their abhorrence of this unnatural rebellion; and in conclusion gave it as his opinion that there was a fair prospect of subduing the rising.

It is said that parsons in Queen Anne's reign displayed their political opinions by the shape of their gowns. An M.A. gown was the sign of a Tory, while a Whig would only appear in a gown with pudding sleeves. The vicar of Bray would of course have worn them "when George in pudding time came o'er."

The following lines from one of the Wortham papers in a Betts handwriting, show perchance which way the family sympathies lay :—

"THE PILFERING BROOD

"What a cursed Crew have we got  
From a Country called Han—r.  
A wretched Race to our disgrace,  
Which we too late discover.  
Drive them hence, drive them hence,  
Quickly, quickly drive them hence.  
Here's a health, Here's a health  
Here's a health to our Lawful P——e.

2

Had you seen their Publick Entry,  
When first they graced the City,  
Each did appear in his best gear  
Like pilfering poor Banditti ;  
Drive etc.

## 3

Now they have got our Money,  
And our Estates are carving,  
If they stay here another year,  
They'll leave us not one Farthing ;  
Drive etc.

## 4

The only way to save us,  
And keep both Church and Steeple,  
Is to bring in our lawful K—g,  
The Father of his people.  
Let him come, let him come,  
Quickly, Quickly let him come,  
Here's his health, here's his health,  
Here's his health and safe Return."

In a different handwriting are some satirical verses on the Marquis of Wharton and the Bishop of Salisbury. Wharton had been created a Duke by the Pretender ; but coming over to England, he changed his side and became a warm supporter of King George. In the song, the marquis and bishop are represented as together in the lower regions, conspiring to dethrone his Satanic Majesty, and bring in the House of Hanover. The Bishop says in conclusion :—

" Right Marquis of Wharton,  
T'is what I just thought on,  
His title nor you nor I know.  
'Twould be a fine thing,  
If horns made a king,  
I'm sure he's not Jure Divino."

On her son Edmund's marriage, Susanna Betts his mother gave him the old Gascoigne Bible which she had



brought into the family. And below the original inscription "Grisel Gascoigne hir book," Edmund wrote :—

" now Edmund Betts'

De

Marlingford Oct. 5 1715.

De

Wortham Oct. 5th 1724."

Edmund and his bride lived at Marlingford for the first years of their married life. There, on the 29th of February 1716 their first child Susan was born "at twenty minutes after three of ye clock in ye afternoon." The exact time is noted so that the child's horoscope could be more accurately cast. The next year, the birth of another daughter Elizabeth is entered in the Bible, "on ye 9th of June 1717 at eighteen minutes after eleven o'clock at night being Whitsunday." Their three next children, George, Edmund, and Mary, were born at Wymondham.

In 1719 Edmund Betts lost his mother. As he had been well provided for on his marriage, when two farms at Blo'Norton were settled on him by his father, his mother left him merely "My little silver tankard and £15 to buy him and his wife mourning," all her real and personal estate going to her eldest son George.

George, a lonely bachelor, now persuaded his brother Edmund to live with him at Wortham, and to take the trouble of the estate off his hands. To this end, a curious deed was executed, by which in 1724 George made over "his capital messuage" and estate to his cousin Thomas Fulcher of Bressingham, in trust for his brother Edmund with remainder to his son, on condition that Edmund should provide George with "all

necessaries of meat, drink, washing, and lodging suitable for him," and also keep and depasture a horse for him, and provide him a servant with a horse to attend him "when he goe abroad." Edmund covenanted also to allow him £60 yearly (a much larger sum then than now), to be paid quarterly in the south porch of the parish church of Wortham.

Edmund Betts' third son Thomas was born at Wortham the year after this agreement, but died two years later, and was buried "in Wortham church at ye feet of his aunt Elizabeth."

In the family Bible is pinned with an ancient soldered headed pin this affidavit of his burial in woollen. "Suffolk March 31st, 1727. Elizabeth Woodcock then made oath that the Body of Thomas Betts of Wortham was buried in Sheeps Wool only according to Law

|                    |   |                 |
|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| Sworn before me    | } | <i>Witness.</i> |
| Thomas Birch       |   | George Betts.   |
| Curate of Redgrave |   | Edmund Betts."  |

In 1666, an Act had been passed, which with a view to encourage the manufacture of woollen, enacted that all dead bodies should be wrapped in woollen only; and by an Act of 1668 the clergywere required to enter in the register the receipt by them of affidavits that the law had been complied with. For burial in linen a special fee was demanded. Thus in 1700, for "the burial of Thomas Deye senior in linen" a fine of five pounds was exacted, which is duly entered in the parish registers of Eye.

In the early eighteenth century the wool industry was

still declining, and six years before the burial in "sheeps wool" of the infant Thomas Betts, an Act of Parliament had actually forbidden the living to wear calico—"painted calico" having till then been the mode for ladies—to the detriment of the wool trade.

## CHAPTER XIX

1717-1734

### INTRODUCTION OF PHEASANT REARING—A GRIM WAGER —A SPINSTER'S CALCULATION

**O**N the death in 1717 of Thomas Thurlow rector of both the medieties of Wortham, William Randall was instituted to Wortham Jarvis, and Henry Stebbing, D.D., to Wortham Everard.

In Wortham as in most country parishes, the then current compositions for tithes dated before turnips had been grown as a field crop ; but now, new incumbents demanded tithes on the new crop.

A case of refusal to pay tithes on turnips had occurred in the neighbouring parish of Wattisfield, and was celebrated, by probably a member of the Betts family, in some MS. sheets of doggerel lines found among the family papers :—

“ He took tithe roots to warm his boots,  
And blocks his beef to boil ;  
Sith timber tops he took of souls,  
That he cou'd over-rule.  
You should do well old Clears to tell,  
What danger will accrue,  
He falsely swore he knew full well.  
Ye pillory is his due.

If we proceed, his ears will bleed,  
 His cause is bad enough ;  
 He must I fear be forced to wear  
 The pillar'd wooden roof."

Judging from these lines, the parishioners of Wattisfield gained their case ; but at Wortham the result of the dispute would seem to have been otherwise. The attornies employed by the parishioners, one of whom was " Tom Martin " the antiquary of Palgrave, show in their letters to Edmund Betts that they thought the case weak. It was based on the antiquated customs of tithing to which Edmund's grandfather George Betts had in 1592 attached his signature, with the other " annceyent inhabitants " of Wortham.

While the tithe dispute was raging, it is entered in the Bible that " Angellica," youngest child of Edmund Betts, was baptised " ye 19 of October 1727. Mad<sup>m</sup> Alick, Mad<sup>m</sup> Hunt, Godmothers. Coz James Betts Godfather. N.B. Mad<sup>m</sup> Hunt dyd ye next day at Brissingham."

Did the angry rectors refuse to register this baptism ? Edmund's next entry is :—" Now I examined ye Register ye 12 of May 1728 and Angellica was not registered then. She died ye 22 September 1728 and was buried ye 25th instant in ye church by (the side of) my brother George."

George Betts' death had taken place soon after the birth of Angellica, he lived just long enough to add this codicil to his will : " Whereas Thomas Betts, my late nephew to whom I had given in my will £100 is lately dead ; I give the £100 to Angellica Betts my niece." The will confirmed the Deed of arrangement between the testator and his brother Edmund, by which all his



property was to go to Edmund, with remainder to Edmund's eldest son George. In his codicil the testator advised that no timber growing on his freeholds in Wortham and Redgrave should be cut until George was twenty-four.

Since the publication of Evelyn's "*Sylva*," when the first note of alarm was sounded, country gentlemen had been alive to the then shortage of timber, and the necessity and profit of planting for future navies. Notes in George Betts' handwriting cover the margins of a treatise on husbandry published in 1721. The treatise recommends that every tenant be obliged to plant certain quantities of timber "for public advantage, and to supply the Nation with that valuable commodity, which at present is so scarce that its price is above one third part more than what it was sold for twenty years ago."

At that time, woods were also being planted as game coverts, pheasant rearing was coming into fashion, though the same treatise remarks: "it was generally thought to be so difficult and expensive that but few will undertake it." The manner of rearing was to keep seven hen pheasants to one cock in a pen, and to feed on "pollard, milk, and a common hen's egg."

George Betts by his will left £500 to his younger nephew Edmund; and to his three nieces, Susan, Elizabeth, and Mary, £100 each. He also bequeathed a guinea apiece for mourning rings, to "my cousin Thomas Betts of Yoxford and his wife."

To this branch of the Betts are erected several mural monuments in Yoxford Church—the most noteworthy being that of William Betts, father of Thomas—bearing

the same arms as those of the Wortham family. The lengthy Latin inscription on this monument to William Betts states that he "was sprung from a family distinguished (if any is distinguished) both for faith towards the King and for probity of morals." He died in 1709 aged fifty-nine. His wife was Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Mann of Yoxford and Ipswich, probably the "Mr Mann" Recorder of Ipswich with whom John Evelyn dined, during a visit to that town in 1677. William Betts was an active justice, and lord of five Suffolk manors, of which Halesworth was one; he was also Recorder of Dunwich, once a city, now overwhelmed by the ever-encroaching sea.

The wife of the Thomas Betts of Yoxford mentioned in George Betts' will, was Avice Byrd, of Roydon, an adjoining parish to Wortham.

The many MS. sheets of merry rhymes written at this period by members of the Betts family, record a constant round of festive gatherings. It was then counted no shame for gentlemen to be overtaken in their cups.

" For as bread is the staff of man's life so ye know  
Good Drink is ye switch makes it merrily go."

That one among their neighbours applied "ye switch" in a manner somewhat mortifying to his family is shown by the Betts papers.

This was William Cullum of Eye (whose father had purchased a share of "ye Mary of Ipswich"). After William's death in 1727 a claim was brought against his estate, which his widow and executrix thought it her duty to contest. A case for the opinion of counsel was drawn up by Edward Goate attorney at law, a

nephew of her late husband. It states that in the year 1714, William Cullum, John Wolnoe, and "a parson" whose name is not given, were making merry at a tavern together. They all drank freely, and Mr Cullum became so incapable that he had to be led home, though his house was quite close by. The occurrence would probably have excited no comment, but for a wager which had been entered into by the jolly toppers, "while William was very much in liquor." The wager was recorded by a formal agreement binding the executors of the parties, which was signed next day, and witnessed by the parson and one Cason. It stated that "William Cullum layed John Wolnoe £100 to £20 that he would survive him."

Counsel's opinion is scribbled at the foot of the case :—  
"Mrs Cullum is obliged to pay this £100 and cannot defend herself either in law or equity." Born of a combative family, the Cropleys of Shelland, Martha Cullum could not have relished being thus forced to surrender without fighting, even for such a paltry cause.

The Wortham papers give a good idea of the social life of the neighbourhood in the early years of the eighteenth century. Nathaniel Deye and Mary his wife daughter of William and Martha Cullum, occupied Moore Hall in Eye; "Coz James Betts" had a house in Diss; at Palgrave lived the antiquary Tom Martin whose book, the "History of Thetford," remains, as he prophesied, his only monument; Lord Cornwallis, the great man of the neighbourhood, lived at Brome; Redgrave Hall, once the seat of the Bacons, was now the home of Rowland Holt, nephew of the Chief Justice; while the rectory

of Oakley sheltered Dr Broome, poet and erstwhile friend of Pope.

Broome translated eight books of the *Odyssey*. Pope rewarded him with £500—and with a niche in the “*Dunciad*,” and their friendship cooled. Pope, in his turn, was ridiculed by Henley :—

“ Pope came off clean with Homer ; but they say  
Broome went before and kindly swept the way.”

Riddles seem then to have been very much the fashion, and the Betts preserved many of that date, among their treasures being a piece of yellow paper carefully folded and endorsed :—“ Dr Broomes enigmie very curious.”

Inside in a sprawling masculine hand is written—

“ Mystic is my look, and tho’ my name  
May vary, yet my Royalty’s the same :  
Now I a male, a female now am seen,  
Now I a king resemble, now a Queen :  
Yet such strange virtue in my person lies,  
That he who dares but Imitate me dies.”

The crime of coining was then punishable by death.

There was also at Wortham a manuscript poem of Broome’s addressed to Lord Cornwallis’ two little girls (the eldest aged twelve) who had given him a map of the world drawn by themselves.

It was then considered fashionable for gentlemen to compose verses on every occasion, no matter how small a gift they had that way. The following lines describing the Redgrave Ball “ on ye illustrious fair Lady Lucy’s birthday,” are signed by George Betts :—

“ Jack Clerk and myself with ye trusty Freemoult  
Rid to pay our devoirs to ye generous Holt.  
Friend Gibbs was before us boxed up in his chaise,  
And ye Prettymans roll’d in a coach at their ease.  
The Lord of the Manor gave welcome to all,  
But ye scheme we pursued was an elegant Ball.  
Then each mortal squire had a partner divine,  
And ye lovely Miss Lovel by good chance was mine.”

“ The fair lady Lucy,” in whose honour this ball was given, was Mrs Thomas Holt, wife of Rowland Holt’s second son ; and the ball must have taken place between 1721, the year of her marriage, and 1727, when George Betts the verse-maker died.

Another member of the Wortham circle at this time was a young clergyman, Samuel Shuckforth or Shuckford, as he now began to sign himself. The names of his father Samuel Shuckforth of Palgrave, and of his mother Catherine Needham, have already appeared in these pages. She was, it will be remembered, the sister of William Needham, chaplain to Archbishop Sancroft.

Young Shuckford had been educated at Caius College, Cambridge, and began his clerical career as curate of Diss. It was probably while living at Diss that he fell in love with Mary Betts, sister of “ Coz James Betts ” of Diss ; but they did not marry till 1721, when he obtained the living of Hardwick in Norfolk. Shuckford was then thirty-three. At first the good man with his heart in his books seems to have found matrimony rather irksome than otherwise, for a few months after his marriage he wrote thus to a friend : “ Tis too soon for me to pretend to write to you about the satisfaction of a



married life : it is a subject of weight and moment ; it requires as many experiments as Sir Isaac Newton made about Lights and Colours, and perhaps, (I don't say as much patience but) as much skill in trying them."

His patience, and perhaps that of his young wife, in time transformed him into a most domestic if eccentric husband. After the birth of his little daughter Ann, he was moved to study Mr. Locke's book, "Thoughts concerning Education ; and his lengthy extracts therefrom makes one sorry for poor little Nanny.

The first thing noted is that the child should never be warmly clad, but the same in winter as in summer, so as to be made all face like the Scythians. Her shoes must let in water, so that she may take no more harm from wet feet than she would from wet hands. The child's meals should not be at fixed times, but varied constantly every day, and her drink should be only small beer ! Her bed should be hard, rather a quilt than feathers, and made variously every day, so that she should learn to sleep anyhow. Other notes, such as not to eat much meat, and to be always in the open air, agree with the opinions of to-day.

Marriage and the expenses of housekeeping, versus single blessedness, were the subject of a clever skit in the *Norwich Mercury* of 25th October 1729. The newspaper is a single sheet about fourteen by eight inches square ; and the spinster's estimate takes up one side, and her amusing remarks as to her suitor's income nearly the whole of the other :—

*The Calculations of Mrs. Elizabeth Balance*

My fortune, she says, is just £2000, which brings in with very little trouble clearly £100 a year.

I board with a female relation in a pleasant country and agreeable neighbourhood, from which she removes in the winter to her house in London for which I pay yearly.

Cloaths, linen and washing

Books

Presents to my cousin's servants

My expenses in London at Plays etc never amount to more than £10 per annum—I sometimes play at Quadrille, and as often win as lose ; but if the latter it is comprized in the same sum

The greatest part of the remaining £20 I lay by as a reserve, for sickness or any other accident.

The rest I bestow on the poor, and pass for a very charitable and generous person

£    s.    d.

25. 00. 00.

30. 00. 00.

10.

5.

10.

20.

---

100. 00. 00.

---

“ Thus I dispose of my own fortune ; and what I should gain by marrying the Squire will best be seen, by considering how his revenue would be laid out, and how much would come to my share.—I must premise that my fortune was intended to pay off a mortgage on his estate, so there would be no addition thereby to his £1000 per Annum.”

*The unavoidable expenses of Timothy Shallow Esqre*

|   | £     | s.  | d.  |
|---|-------|-----|-----|
| Imp. Deductions for taxes parish and<br>County Charges.   | 180.  | 00. | 00. |
| For Housekeeping at least.  | 360.  | 00. | 00. |
| For his own cloathes I will venture to<br>put down no more than   | 20.   | 00. | 00. |
| Coach & horses, wages of coachman<br>and Footman, and their liveries cannot<br>be less than                               | 120.  | 00. | 00. |
| A gardener & other servants wages<br>must amount to   | 30.   | 00. | 00. |
| Hounds, setting dogs, horses etc with<br>allowance for horses lost and hurt,<br>bets at races, and other incident charges | 120.  |     |     |
| Ale, wine, brandy, pipes & tobacco,   | 80.   |     |     |
| Journeys to London to get rid of his<br>wife, and expenses there.   | 50.   |     |     |
| Expenses at an Ale house, in private<br>conference with the landlord, the<br>barber & the excise man                      | 10.   |     |     |
| Books pens ink and paper  | 00    | 00  | 00  |
| Apothecary and surgeon after drinking<br>bouts and hunting matches  | 10.   | —   | —   |
| For a steward to perform the drudgery<br>of receiving and paying money  | 20    | —   | —   |
|   | <hr/> |     |     |
|   | 1000: | 0:  | 0:  |

The twenty-five pounds which our sprightly spinster was supposed to pay for her board, seems now a very inadequate sum ; but it is evident that money went much further then : twenty pounds was the sum actually paid for a lady's yearly board, as is shown in the Shuckford household accounts. Provisions were what we should now think absurdly cheap, even consider-

ing the then value of money. Here is a butcher's bill which was found at Wortham :—

*An Account of meat received from Francis Hubbard 29 April 1732*

|   | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|----|----|
| 10 <sup>lbs.</sup> of Beef . . . . .                        | — | 2  | 6  |
| Neck of Mutton 7 <sup>lbs.</sup> 2 <sup>oz.</sup> . . . . . | — | 1  | 6  |
| Quarter of Lamb . . . . .                                   | — | 2  | 0  |
| Leg of Mutton . . . . .                                     | — | 1  | 6  |

At the bottom of the second side of the same *Norwich Mercury*, the price of South Sea stock is stated to be "102 14th." That it was still at a high level was due most likely to the Parliamentary interference in the Company's affairs in 1721. In the Wortham library a pamphlet was found dated 1720, exposing the financial rottenness of the South Sea Company when in the height of its popularity, "by a tradesman in the City, whose name is not to be found in any of the subscriptions."

After his elder brother's death, Edmund Betts applied himself more than ever to the care of his estate, which was spread over six parishes. He followed the family custom of himself farming the home farm, and paid the labourers partly in money and partly in kind.

For example, his account of the money due to one James Birch, February 1730 :—

For your part of 36 Comb 2 bushels of oats

|   |     |      |
|---|-----|------|
| thratching (sic) at 6d. . . . .             | 9s. | 1½d. |
| Y <sup>r</sup> part dressing them . . . . . | 1s. |      |
| 1 days work plowing . . . . .               | 1s. |      |
| 3 days ditching at Redgrave . . . . .       | 3   |      |
| 5 days at Wortham . . . . .                 | 5   |      |
| 2 days & ½ making wood . . . . .            | 2   | - 6  |

This account was paid by giving Birch 1 bushel of malt at 2s. 6d., 1 bushel of wheat at 4s., and the rest in money.

In January 1732, Edmund Betts sent his eldest boy George to his own old school at Bury, giving him as a parting present James Seaborn's leather covered notebook, in which Edmund had entered his own accounts, and now wrote his son's name, "George Betts Ejus Liber Ex Dono Patris Edmundi Betts Jan ye 3<sup>rd</sup> Anno Domini 1732/3."

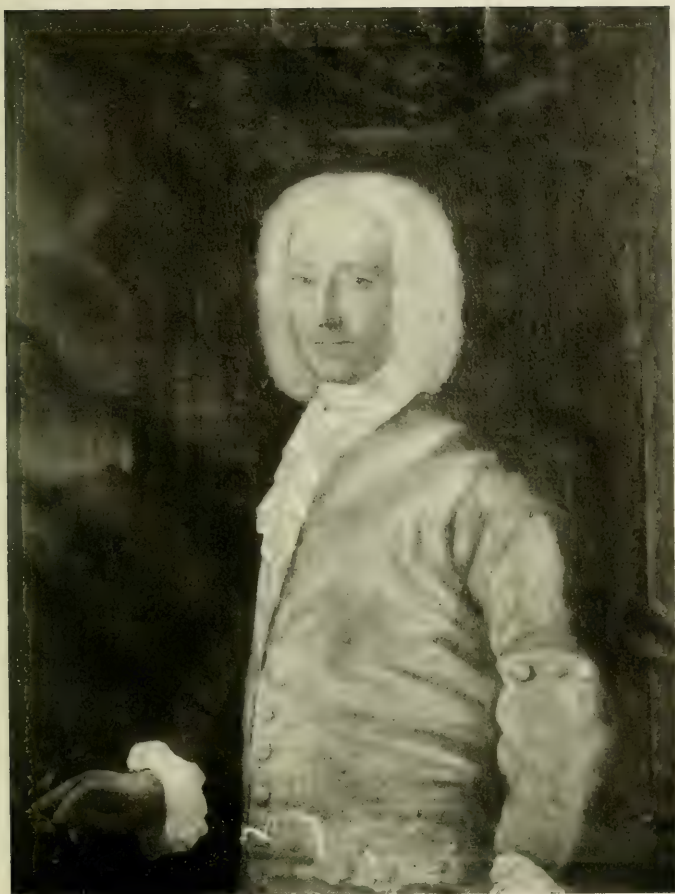
Edmund Betts died the same year, and in October young George was summoned from school to attend his father's funeral, and placed under the guardianship of his cousin Humfrey Rant of Dickleburgh, recorder of Ipswich. This gentleman had married Mary, only child of Mrs Nathaniel Life of Swaffham, who was the elder sister of Mrs Edmund Betts.

The year before his death, Edmund Betts had acted as churchwarden and, together with Thomas Flowerdew the other warden, rebuilt the north aisle of Wortham church.

His portrait and that of his wife were painted just before his death. His picture represents him with a sprig of oak bearing three acorns in his right hand, emblematic perhaps of his Jacobite proclivities—it was a well-known badge of the beloved Stuarts—or it may possibly have been intended to testify his faithfulness to his brother's directions, regarding the preservation of the timber on the family estate.

Young George Betts methodically kept his accounts in the book his father had given him. His guardian allowed him £12 a year for pocket money, which was later raised to £18, an income frequently supplemented





EDMUND BETTS OF WORTHAM  
1681-1733





ABIGAIL, WIFE OF EDMUND BETTS OF WORTHAM



by sums "received from my mamah." School fees for the first term after his father's death, came to £4, 11s. 8d., "a wigg cost £1. 3. 0," and shaving two shillings. George was not more than fourteen, so that this last item must have stood for shaving his boyish poll. Wigs were then considered necessities for all classes, ages, and conditions of men, and the commonest wig cost a guinea. An article in every apprentice's indentures then provided that his master "should find him in one good and sufficient wig yearly." In the *Norwich Mercury* for 1733 is an advertisement describing a cordwainer's runaway apprentice, as "wearing a short black wig, and brown drugget coat with flat buttons."

The autumn of 1733 was a time of great excitement, for a general election was in progress. Samuel Shuckford, now rector of Shelton in Norfolk, which he held together with Hardwick, kept a book of cuttings from the *Norwich Mercury* for 1733-4, by means of which we can see the proceedings through Whig spectacles.

The candidates for Norfolk were, on the Whig side the Hon. Robert Coke and Mr. William Morden,—on the Tory side Sir Edmund Bacon and Mr. Wodehouse. The candidates of both parties visited every town and village, riding through the streets accompanied by as many gentlemen and freeholders as they could collect. The qualification for voting was still forty shillings income from freehold; and then, as now, there were most stringent laws against bribery, which were constantly evaded.

Mr Shuckford, it appears, worked hard as an honorary agent for Mr Morden. Pasted in his book are the two following letters from an out-voter.



“ To the Hon<sup>ble</sup>. Capt. Morden  
 at Suffield Hall near  
 North Walsom in Norfolk  
 Colchester 24 Dec. 1733

“ SIR

I am informed that you stand a Candidate for Member of Parliament for the County of Norfolk. I am a Freeholder in the said County, and am very willing to give you my vote, providing you will allow me for the Charges of my journey and give me any timely notice. If you think it worth your while please to acquaint my Brother Joseph Chapman, Farmer, living at the Bush House Farm in Banham near New Buckenham, and leave it with him what you please to allow ; the sooner you doe it the better before I am engaged to any other Gent. My Estate is in the occupation of Wm. Clark, Blacksmith, and the Widd : Matthews in Shelfhanger near Diss. If you please to apply to my Brother desire him to give me your answer which my humble Servis is all at present

from

S<sup>r</sup> yo<sup>r</sup> hum Servt  
 Benj<sup>n</sup> Chapman.”

Chapman's next letter to Mr Morden is dated May 6, 1734.

“ SIR

“ I received an answer by the hands of Mr Shuckford the Clergyman of Shelton, and I, not knowing the time when the Election would be, occasioned my goeing over with Intent to serve you at the Election, and Mr Shuckford came to me at New Buckenham, but would not sattisfie me for the charges of my journey, nor yet give me a Mugg

of ale. Mr. Coxage heard how I was slighted by Mr Shuckford, and has promised to assist me to Norwich.

"I have made two Journeys over, which have been verry Expenceive. My Brother deposited two pounds four Shill<sup>s</sup> for my Horse hire and Expence ; if he can by any hands be sattisfied for the same by the 19 day of this Inst May, I design to be at his House and then freely serve you and Robert Cook Esq<sup>re</sup>."

In the last year of the expiring Parliament, the Whigs had brought in an Excise Bill for imposing a tax on wine amongst other things, but they failed to carry it. The great Dr Johnson voiced the general opinion. In the seventh edition of his dictionary, corrected by the author, he defined excise as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property." So unpopular was this bill, that the names and coats-of-arms of those members of Parliament who had voted against it were printed on silk banners, which were sold all over England. One of these banners, framed and glazed, used to hang in the Hall at Wortham.

The Tory election cry was "Liberty, property and no Excise"; to which the Whigs retaliated by the cry, "Tories and Jacobites," and accused their opponents of wishing to upset the government and bring back the Stuarts.

The then Mayor of Norwich was evidently a Whig, for on the 30th January 1734, being the anniversary of the Martyrdom of King Charles, he requested Mr Shuckford to preach in the Cathedral. Shuckford's sermon evoked a storm from the Tory party; and a parody of it in rhyme, entitled "A Looking-glass for a time serving

parson," was printed and circulated. Shuckford much amused copied the verses out at length, which begin :—

“ Upstarts a saucy pedant of the schools  
To bridle senates with pragmatic rules,”

and proceed to directly accuse the minister of preaching in the Whig interest, with the intent :—

“ A prebend or a dean to fish up  
Or providentially a bishop.”

In the November before the election, Shuckford had the management of a meeting and entertainment, in the interest of the Whig candidates, which took place at Diss. Mr Coke and Mr Morden, by his arrangement, were met at Scole-Inn by above 200 freeholders, and more than 20 of the neighbouring clergy ; and afterwards they paraded the narrow winding streets of Diss, their train being closed by a very considerable number of coaches of the gentry. Ringing of bells and acclamations greeted them. In the middle of the proceedings they were confronted by a “ very odd Tory cavalcade, with a drum, a trumpet, and a board upon a stick carried as a standard, with the words ‘ Liberty Property and no Excise ’ painted on it ; followed by a cart containing four barrels of beer with the same words painted on them. “ Justice should be done,” continues the *Norwich Mercury*, “ to the inhabitants of Diss, by remarking that they discouraged any riot, and expressed the greatest civilities to the Whig candidates Mr. Coke and Mr. Morden.”

Shuckford made out the expense of this meeting to be £154, 15s. 10d., including dinners at four different inns,

ringers, guns, music, and men to keep the peace. Among the clergy present besides himself, were Dr Broome the poet, Mr Gibbs, "the friend Gibbs" of George Betts' verses on the Redgrave Ball, and Mr Randall rector of Wortham.

## CHAPTER XX

1737-1745

THE GAY YOUNG SQUIRE OF WORTHAM—DR SHUCKFORD,  
ROYAL CHAPLAIN—HIS ACCOUNT BOOKS

**I**N 1737, Mrs Edmund Betts married Jeremiah Burroughes of Wymondham, a widower. Her son George had left Bury school for Clare Hall Cambridge the year before, and became a fellow commoner at Clare in 1738.

Susan Betts the eldest sister, was by now the wife of John Soley, rector of Long Stratton in Norfolk; and soon afterwards, Elizabeth followed suit, by marrying Jehoshaphat Postle, an attorney at Norwich, leaving Mary the youngest sister with her mother in her new home at Wymondham. During vacation, the house at Wortham being empty, George lodged with Mr Darby, a doctor at Diss, paying eight shillings a week for his own board, and four shillings for that of his servant. His accounts, which he kept minutely, chronicle all his doings; his frequent visits to friends and relations; even such trifling items as the sums he lost at cards, and presents of snuff for his "sister Soley," are all entered.

He was constantly "at ye club," both at Norwich and Bury, or at the theatre. A "ball at Norwich" cost him seven shillings. He kept a horse and a servant at Cambridge, and frequented both the bowling green





MARY, DAUGHTER OF EDMUND BETTS OF WORTHAM



and the "camping ground." Camping, a rough cross-country football, James I. had denounced as "meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof." A match on Diss common, Norfolk against Suffolk, was played by three hundred a side, and lasted fourteen hours.

George's diary gives us glimpses of Ipswich in "ye olden time"; in 1741, he paid a shilling "aboard a man of war at Ipswich." This ship was the *Hampshire*, of fifty guns, launched that year at Donham Bridge. A salmon weighing 22 lbs. had been taken not far from there in 1739.

Like his grandfather, George was a devotee of hunting and a master of hounds. In 1742, one Jack Knivett was paid for keeping his hounds two guineas, not an extravagant sum; but wages were low and "vales" counted for something: witness this entry in his accounts:—"Oct. 2nd 1746, Agreed with Job Segsby to serve me till Christmas upon liking, at two shillings a week, and that if he stayed after, at ye Rate of five pounds per ann: he to have half ye vales with Tom, and a Livery which is to last him two Years, and ye Great Coat to be mine."

About this time, "ye gray crop mare" is sold for £8, 9s. 6d., and "ye bay horse" bought in her place for £9, 9s.

Master, servants, horses, and hounds were all bled at regular intervals.

The accounts show that setting partridges was practised by George Betts; for a small sum is entered "for mending my setting net, 4s. 6d." This method, now utterly forgotten, of taking partridges, dates certainly from Edward I.'s reign, probably earlier. The Elizabethan

book on "English Dogges" describes how the "index setter (a trained spaniel) betrayeth the place of the byrde's last abode"; when "the fowler immediately operateth and spreadeth his net, and his dog draweth neere to the fowle that by his presence they might be the authors of their own ensnaring." And the sport is enlarged upon in Gervase Markham's "Art of Fowling," published half a century later during the Commonwealth.

"Vales" given to the servants at his friends' houses, are constant entries in George Betts' accounts. Among other places, he stays a day or two "at Hengrave with Sir F. Gage," "with Sir Edmund Bacon at Garboldisham," "at Bacton with the Prettymans," and with "Horace Walpole at Wolterton."

After coming of age, George Betts made his home at Wortham, and following the family tradition, farmed the home farm. His accounts with the labourers he employed are attested at the foot of each page by the mark of the wage recipient. Labour was still at one shilling a day; but to set against this, provisions other than grain, were still proportionately cheap. In 1739, two stone and two and a half pounds of pork cost seven shillings and sevenpence halfpenny, and a pint of butter sevenpence.

Butter has been sold by the pint in Suffolk within living memory. Farmers now sell it by the lb. and have gained by the change, charging the same price, though the lb. is somewhat under the pint in weight.

In August 1741, George was invited to Canterbury by his cousins the Shuckfords.

Dr Shuckford, still retaining his livings of Hardwick and Shelton, was now also rector of Warnham and of All Saints', Lombard Street, prebendary of Canterbury, and

chaplain to His Majesty George II. He was, besides, distinguished as the author of many books ; the MS. of one : " Sacred and Profane History of the World," was preserved at Wortham. At the time of George Betts' visit, Dr Shuckford was engaged on his great work, " The Creation and Fall of Man."

Another member of the Royal household, Dr Benjamin Hoadly the King's physician and a brother author, was connected with the Shuckfords, his wife being a daughter of William Betts of Yoxford.

George Betts, accompanied by a friend, rode on horseback to Canterbury viâ London, leaving Wortham on August 16 and spending ten days on the journey, which included four days' stay in London. He kept a journal of each day's ride, but it is unfortunately too long for insertion here. A memento of this London visit is the following MS. skit found at Wortham, purporting to be an address to the King on his return from Hanover, and His Majesty's reply :—

" Society of White's at gaming assembled

" Most righteous Sovereign

" May it please your Majesty

" We the Lords, knights etc. of the Society of White's, beg leave to throw ourselves at your Majesty's feet (our honours and consciences being under the table, and our fortunes being ever at stake) ; and congratulate your Majesty on your happy return to these kingdoms, which assembles us together, to the great advantage of some, the ruin of others, and the unspeakable satisfaction of all, both us our wives and children. And we beg leave to assure your Majesty of our most unfeigned loyalty and



attachment to your sacred Person ; And that, next to the kings of Diamonds, Clubs, Spades and Hearts, we love honour and adore you.

“ To which His Majesty was pleased to return this most gracious answer.

“ My Lords and Gentlemen

“ I return you my thanks for your loyal address ; but whilst I have such rivals in your affections, I can never think it worth procuring or regarding. I look upon you as a pack of cards and shall deal with you accordingly.”

George Betts was probably a member of White's the oldest of our Clubs, which dates from 1697.

From London, our young squire rode to Greenwich, from there to Dartford, next day to Rochester and Sittingbourne, arriving at the Shuckfords' house in Canterbury on the 26th August. On Sunday 30th he writes :—

“ Walkt with the ladies in what they call the Oaks, a tolerable pleasant walk where all the company of the town presently met ; and there I saw their most flaming Beauties, such as the Miss Boyces, Frennd, Lynch, Stokes, Pudner etc., and there were really some pretty faces.”

Dr Shuckford's household comprised, besides himself and his wife, his daughter Nanny now grown up, and a friend and companion, a certain Miss Freeman.

During his ten days' stay, George Betts was taken by his cousins to see Dover Castle and other sights of the neighbourhood. In return, he entertains them all at the Play, paying only twelve shillings for a party of six, and takes the ladies to the Assembly, driving there in Dr Donne's carriage. George was evidently happy in the society of some among the “ most flaming beauties,” for

he wagered a Mr Pykarell three guineas to one, that he "would be married before St Michelmas 1744." He lost his three guineas.

Dr Shuckford kept throughout his life household and other accounts of the most detailed character, which were found among the papers at Wortham. In consequence of the taking of plate ships, notably at Vigo, during the late wars, a great deal of foreign money was then current in England. In 1744, Shuckford had in his purse, coins whose value he thus sets down: "A Pistole equal to 16s. 6d., A Louis D'or 20s. 0, A double Louis D'or 24s. 0, A Moidore 27s. 0, A Port or Johann 3s. 6." And such money long continued in use; for as late as 1772, we find among the Wortham papers a table showing the English equivalents to the foreign coins, "which a gentleman receives from his banker for convenience of carriage."

The closely written pages of Dr Shuckford's vellum covered account books give many quaint details of his domestic life. For part of the year, duty compelled him to be in residence at Canterbury; and for a month, to be in waiting as Royal chaplain. The rest of his time was spent at his parsonage of Shelton, which he looked upon always as his home. In 1739, he insured his dwelling house at Shelton against fire with "the Royal Exchange Assurance Company" for £600, at a premium of £1, 8s. The policy, headed by a quaint print of the Royal Exchange, is among the Betts papers. He never now resided at any one of his three other livings, but placed curates in them who had to content themselves with being passing rich on forty pounds a year.

For the annual move from Shelton in Norfolk to Canterbury, he hired a coach for £6, which carried beside

his servants and family, four trunks, three portmanteaux, and his wig box. The heavy luggage was carted viâ London to Canterbury. The total expense of the move, including a few days' stay in London, Shuckford set down at £26, but this did not include the ladies' shopping.

His accounts show that two hoops and a cloak were bought for £1, 10s. ; and stays for Nanny at £1, 15s. ; "a suit of cloathes" for her cost £8, 4s. 6d., and four pounds for her riding habit was not thought excessive. A nightgown for Mrs Shuckford for £6, 14s. 3d., and another for himself at a quarter that sum were among the Doctor's purchases. "Nightgown," says Johnson's dictionary, meant a "loose gown worn for undress," answering probably to ladies' tea-gowns of modern days ; that for the Doctor relieving his shoulders of the silk cassock, then constantly worn by the clergy.

Longer wigs were coming into fashion, a new one now cost Dr Shuckford £4, and a beaver hat two guineas ; a girdle buckle, a pair of shoe buckles, and a pair of stockings all for ten shillings, together with spectacles for £1, 6s., completed his personal purchases. A present of "teaboards" for Aunt Harvey cost the good Doctor 6s. 6d.<sup>1</sup> For diversion while in London the family spent £1, 0s. 6d. "at Faux Hall" (Vauxhall).

Preserved at Wortham were ladies' "Cloathes" of this period ; the actual ones it may be, whose price has just been given, and which in 1741 had enhanced the charms of Mrs and Miss Shuckford. These quaint old garments were lent by the last Betts of Wortham to the South

<sup>1</sup> In 1739, Hyson tea cost 21s. the lb., the best Imperial tea 18s., and the cheapest Bohea, 7s. 6d. Coffee was only 5s. the lb.

Kensington Museum, where they were exhibited for some years.

Lottery tickets and cards were among Dr Shuckford's incidental expenses, and both his wife and daughter had a special allowance for their "card purses." To read or even to think, was then considered ruinous to the complexion, and perhaps for that reason, ladies were vastly fond of cards.

In the autumn of 1741, "Coz James Betts" of Diss died intestate; his sister, Mrs Shuckford, was heiress-at-law, and Dr Shuckford was appointed administrator. Among other things, were bought in a chariot valued at £20, coach horses at eight pounds apiece, and a black mare at six guineas. The widow, who soon married again, took most of the silver.

James Betts left no children. The will of his aunt, Mary Betts of Wymondham proved in 1715, provided that on the death of James, the Scole estate including the famous inn was to be divided between her two nieces Mrs Shuckford, and Mrs Lee who was the only child of Mary Betts' sister Rebecca Seaborn.

Edmund Betts, younger brother of George, married, about this time, Sarah daughter of John Cooke of Rougham near Bury, a lady some years older than himself. Their home was the "White House" in Oakley, now called "Oakley House."

In her maiden days, Sarah Betts had herself composed and collected from her friends a number of verses, which fortunately were kept in the original cover, on which is written "Mrs Sarah Cooke 1720." A great many are on social events at Bury, for instance "On the Duke of Grafton appearing at a concert in the Assembly Rooms



at Bury Nov. 9. 1734." Again, 1735, "On the sisters Lady Mary Powis and Lady Fanny Brudenel :—

" When two together of that race  
 Appear at Bury Fair  
 Amply adorned with every grace  
 And all perfections share."

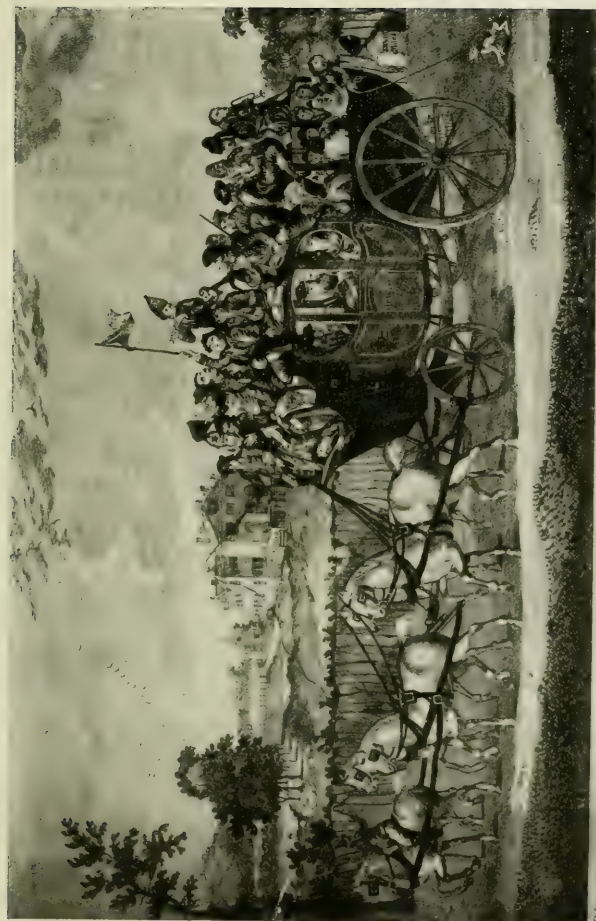
Bury fair whereto flocked the gentry of three counties, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire, was one of the most fashionable of Beauty Shows. It was, by one writer, vilified as a mere marriage mart and place of intrigue—an imputation on the ladies, which by the way Defoe indignantly denies; "the gentlemen," he says, "that wait on them hither ought to resent and correct him for it."

It was probably at one of the fairs that Sarah Cooke first met young Edmund Betts; and the questions put to the lover, in her collection of poems, may perchance have been written for him.

#### " THE TEST OF LOVE

" Do you within a sudden impulse feel  
 To dress, look florid, and appear gentil  
 With glittering Gems, with Velvet and Brocade;  
 Your snowy wrists do Mechlin Pendants grace,  
 And do ye smartest Wiggs adorn thy Face;  
 Do you correct your Gait, adjust your Air,  
 And bid your Tayler take uncommon care,  
 Before your Glass each morning do you stand  
 And tie your Neckcloth with a Critick's Hand,  
 From Hence a real Passion you may prove,  
 For dressing ever was a mark of Love.  
 If in the Ring her graceful Horses prance  
 Does your new Chariot to ye Ring advance,





Original from

PAVING THE LONDON AND BURY-FAR  
CARRIAGE DRIVERS

1854



If in the Mall she chooses to appear  
 Or if at Court, do you attend her there.  
 If in the curst South Sea her all was lost  
 Still would her eyes their former Conquest boast."

Edmund it is to be supposed showed all these symptoms and evidences, for Sarah writes and signs this verse :—

" Love is the Monarch Passion of the mind,  
 Knows no superior, by no Law confined,  
 But triumphs still, impatient of control,  
 O'er all the proud Endowments of the Soul."

Sarah Betts died in 1745. This was the year of the second Jacobite rising. On October 14th, at a county meeting held at Stowmarket, " an association was agreed upon, and a subscription opened, to support His Majesty's person and government." Edmund Betts subscribed five guineas to the fund. Thomas Deye thirty guineas, and Nathaniel Deye ten guineas. The town of Eye sent in to headquarters £1180, 6s.; and £16 was given besides, for the purpose of enlisting four men.

The *Westminster Journal* expressed the general feeling that " the circumstances do at last give a reason for serious alarm." Edinburgh surrendered without firing a gun; it was thought a necessary precaution to have the gates of Newcastle " shut, and built up with a stone wall about two feet thick "; and the King's " little army " was supplemented by " eighteen hundred Swiss and Dutch troops, landed at the Tower, and marched to the North."

Later, when Prince Charlie reached Derby, a veritable panic ensued. King George prepared to fly, and placed

all his valuables on board a yacht, and the financial scare nearly caused the Bank of England to stop payment. Indeed, it is said that this disaster was only averted by a device of the Directors, who employed agents to present notes for payment, which the tellers were instructed to pay in sixpences, thus entailing a delay which prevented many holders of notes from getting near the counters.

After the victory of Culloden, Dr Shuckford as Royal Chaplain, preached a thanksgiving sermon, in which he minutely traces cause and effect. The rebels' first success was, he maintained, due to the unreadiness of the country, engendered by the too oft repeated cry of "the Pretender and invasion," which when at last a reality fell upon deaf ears. The decisive victory he attributes, as in duty bound, to the great military skill of the Duke of Cumberland.

George Betts' name did not appear in the Loyal Association; so it is more than likely that his secret sympathies, as would have been those of his royalist ancestors, were with Prince Charlie.

Several MS. poems on "the forty five" were kept at Wortham. One in the form of a letter addressed to the Rev. Mr James Barker at Redgrave, contains "lines (supposed to have been) taken out of the Marquis of Tullibardine's pocket, when a prisoner in the Tower of London in 1746," which read in column are Hanoverian, read across Jacobite in sentiment :—

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| " I love with all my heart  | The Stuarts party here   |
| The Hanoverian part         | Most Hateful doth appear |
| And for the settlement      | I ever have denyd        |
| my conscience gives consent | To be on Jemmy's side    |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Most righteous is the cause    | To be for such a King                  |
| To fight for George's laws     | Will Britain's ruin bring              |
| This is my mind and heart      | In this opinion I                      |
| Though none sho'd take my part | Resolve to live and die." <sup>1</sup> |

<sup>1</sup> Since copying these lines from the Wortham MSS., I have found them printed in Chambers's "Book of Days."



## CHAPTER XXI

1746-1764

A DRIVING TOUR THROUGH NORFOLK — RELIGIOUS  
STATISTICS OF A COUNTRY PARISH — VALES AT A  
CHRISTENING

**A**FTER the death of Edmund Betts' wife, his sister Mary divided her time between the houses of her two brothers at Wortham and Oakley. In the family she was always called Polly, but to the outside world, having reached the ripe age of twenty-eight, she was known as Mrs Mary Betts. She was the youngest of the family, and a great pet of her brothers ; George kept a horse and side saddle for her use at Wortham, and no doubt she would often accompany him when he rode out with his hounds. Picture her, mounted on " ye grey crop mare," attired in the blue riding habit of the time ; the skirted coat with white silk facings made double breasted, worn with a high cravat, a three-cornered hat, and voluminous skirt.

The story runs, that the Navy owes its present blue uniform to the riding habits of this period ; for until then, naval officers had been clothed in scarlet. King George II. walking in the Mall, was, it is said, so struck with admiration at the Duchess of Bedford's riding dress, that he ordered the naval uniform to be changed to blue and white, on the model of that lady's riding-coat.

Among Mary Betts' treasures is a pathetic poem written in a bold masculine hand, which she carefully endorsed "Lines given me by a gentleman the day he parted from me." A hidden romance perchance; but Mary gave herself no time for idle sorrow. Like all the ladies of her family she was a great housewife, and her household and cookery recipes fill a fair-sized volume. Therein, are directions for making drinks and dishes now despised or long forgotten, but to our ancestors indispensable delicacies, such as, "mead, lemon brandy, hartshorn flummery, orange posset, orange butter, currant wine," and many others. The art of making mead and currant wine yet lingers in the village of Wortham, as in other old-world places which still harbour old-fashioned folk.

In 1746, George Betts made up a party of young men for a driving tour through Norfolk, and was himself treasurer and kept the bills for each night's lodging. The party consisted of five besides George, Mr Burgh, Captain Burgh, Mr Evans, Captain Evans, and Mr Barker, rector of Redgrave, to whom the verses on the '45 had been addressed. They drove, some in chariots, and others in coaches, whose wheels had to be greased daily, and had in all four servants and twelve horses.

Among other places, they visited Houghton, the seat of the second Lord Orford, the elder brother of the celebrated Horace Walpole, who, as appeared in the diary, was a friend of George Betts. Houghton had been rebuilt in 1722, and was famed for its woodwork of mahogany imported specially for the first Lord Orford, when Sir Robert Walpole, and prime minister. George Betts possessed a descriptive MS. catalogue of the

one hundred and sixteen celebrated pictures which the mansion then enshrined. Three years after the driving tour, they were sold to Catherine of Russia for £40,000, a sum considerably less than that lately paid to secure one great picture for the English nation. Holkham, Wells, Holt, Wolterton, Aylsham, Norwich, and Attleburgh were in turn visited by the six friends. Their expenses were not ruinous. At the King's Head, Norwich, dinner for the whole party cost five shillings and fourpence ; this for fish, meat, vegetables, and pudding only ; six bottles of wine, with arrack, punch, beer, and tobacco added on £1, 8s. 6d. to the bill. At the Crown, Swaffham, four pair of soles were served for eighteen pence, and a leg of mutton for three and sixpence. " Cyder, Bumbo, and Mountain " were the drinks they chose there.

The party returned without encountering any of the " gentlemen " who then infested country roads. Accounts of local highway robberies are frequently reported in the Ipswich journal of that day. Even the populous London streets were unsafe. In November 1748, a newspaper kept by the Betts, records that one of the Lords of the Admiralty Lord Duncannon, was stopped in Bond Street by footpads, who presented pistols at the chairmen's heads ; " but on his Lordship jumping out of the chair and drawing his sword, they made off." The same day Lord Orford's uncle the Honourable Horatio Walpole was attacked while driving through Hyde Park, by highwaymen armed with blunderbuss and pistols, who held up his coach, and robbed him of all his valuables.

George Betts was ordained not long after the driving tour, and in 1749 was inducted to the rectory of Bressingham, a presentation which he bought from the patron, the

Duke of Norfolk, for a term of ten years. The Duke, being a Roman Catholic, was, under the then law, prohibited from selling the right of next presentation for a longer term. A few years later, George Betts obtained also the living of West Winch, principally through the influence of Anne, widow of the third Viscount Primrose.

George's brother, the young widower Edmund Betts, married again in 1749. His bride was Martha, only daughter of Nathaniel Deye of Moore Hall and Mary his wife, daughter of the William Cullum, who by dying too soon lost his wager as we have seen. This festive old gentleman's metal armorial seal, and a damask tablecloth woven with the Cullum arms, are Wortham relics of the Betts and Cullum connection. Edmund Betts and Martha Deye were married by an old friend of both families, the Hon. and Rev. Frederick Cornwallis, soon after consecrated Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and who became later Archbishop of Canterbury. After the ceremony, by way of lightening the prospective responsibility of the newly married couple, Mr Cornwallis promised to provide for their son, should they have one, by the gift of a living.

George Betts was not long in following his brother's example ; two years later, he married his distant cousin Anne, daughter of the Rev. Dr Shuckford. The marriage took place at Wortham on the 13th of June, and George settled down to the regular life of a "squarson," a now almost extinct variety of country gentlemen.

Soon after his marriage, he wrote the following account of his parochial cure, in answer to "the Bishop's queries."

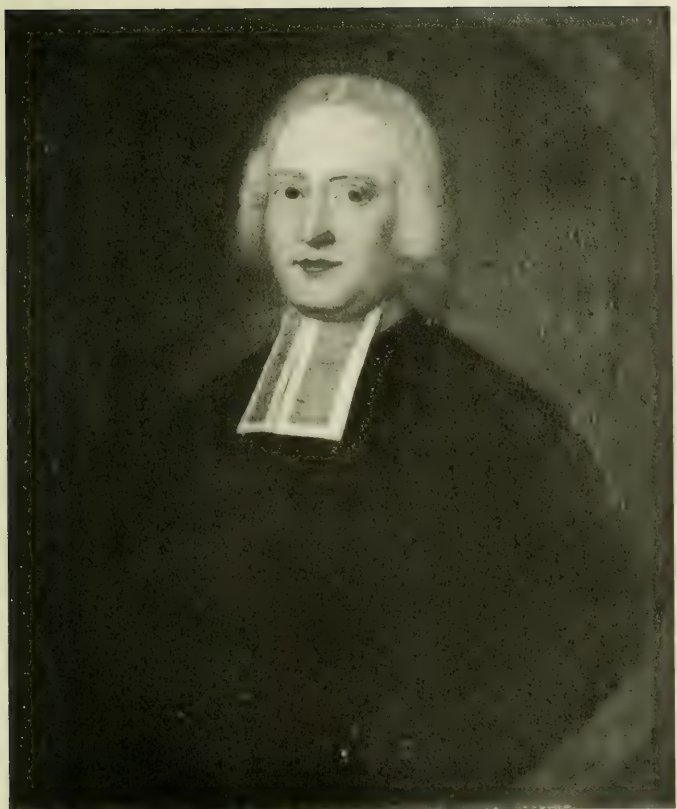
"Brissingham is a large village, but thinly inhabited. There is no Papist, or Dissenter of any Denomination in



it. The People are well behaved and regular at their Church. I do not reside in the Parish ; but within half a mile of the Church, where my ancestors have lived for many generations, and where by your Lordship's Leave I hope to continue to live. I perform publick service twice every Sunday in that Church, but seldom on Holidays. The Sacrament is administered four times in the year, and the number of communicants is commendable in proportion to the number of the inhabitants. A further account of the Charities belonging to the parish may be seen in the Terrier ; they are I believe most honestly disposed of for the purposes for which they were given. The money collected at the offertory is given to the sick and necessitous poor. If there be any other matter relating to the parish which your Lordship wants to be further informed about, I shall at all times, whenever your Lordship commands me, think it my duty to wait upon you, and give you the most faithful and honest account I am able, of whatever you shall want to be informed about."

The beautiful church of Bressingham stands, as George Betts stated, within half a mile of Wortham. A private bridge, known then as Mr Betts' bridge, crosses the narrow Waveney exactly opposite the house, whence a path called the Long Walk leads, at first through trees, and then over a fen, to the hill whereon the church is built. This path George Betts traversed each Sunday with sweet Nanny his wife, on their way to church. There is a portrait of him, just as he then appeared, in his short white wig and clerical bands and gown. During the long service, the rustic congregation we may be sure would have time to take in the details of town Madam's sacque,





THE REVD. GEORGE BETTS OF WORTHAM  
1718-1766



made plain in front, but falling behind in folds over an enormous hoop, and to gaze at the veil which fell to her shoulders, over puffed and powdered hair.

The service over, "Coz Thomas Fulcher," whose home was at Bressingham, would perhaps stroll back with the rector and his wife to two o'clock dinner; and after he had well dined, duly admire the baby, another George Betts, who had been born the year following his parent's marriage. When Thomas Fulcher died in 1764, he devised to George Betts, in memory may be of such Sunday walks, the fenland and path on the Norfolk side of the river to Bressingham Church, "planted and dyked."

Though George Betts was rector of Bressingham, his three children were all baptized in Wortham Church, George, Mary who did not survive her infancy, and Anne, whose birth cost her mother's life. Anne was born in 1757, but was not publicly baptized until 1764. Her aunt Mrs Edmund Betts, thus entered the event in the family Bible:—

"1764 November 7, my niece Anne Betts was baptized in Wortham Church; the sponsors were my self, sister Mary Betts, and the Rev. Mr John Dawney; gave the nurse 10s. 6d., Chamber Maid, 5s. Cooke, 2s. 6d., Coach Man, 2s. 6d., Footman, 2s. 6d., in all one pound 3s."

## CHAPTER XXII

1751-1766

THE LOST ELEVEN DAYS—GEORGE BETTS' MAGISTRATE'S  
BOOK—REFORM OF A BRIDEWELL—"YE LABYRINTH  
OF CHANCERY"

**M**ARTHA, wife of Edmund Betts of Oakley, recorded the births of her six children, in a Bible originally the property of her great grandfather Thomas Deye. Only three out of the six survived their infancy, Martha, Mary, and Harriot.

Against Martha's name in the Bible her mother wrote : " born September 20th, 1751. Her birthday is now the 1st October "—the Act of Parliament directing the adoption of the Gregorian style, having been passed the year of baby Martha's birth.

Under that Act, the year was to be reckoned from the 1st of January instead of the 25th March, as had been the case during the centuries since the year 1155. To make the calendar right, it was officially ordered that the eleven intermediate days from the 2nd to the 14th of September for the year 1752, should be unreckoned and omitted, so that the 3rd day of September under the old style should under the new be dated the 14th. The bill had been brought in by the Earl of Macclesfield ; his son, Lord Parker, when Parliamentary

candidate for Oxfordshire, could never after appear in public without being called upon to restore the eleven days which his father had stolen from the country. Hogarth's picture of a Whig candidate, with a banner inscribed " Give us back our eleven days," commemorates this.

A memento of another political cry, " Wilkes and Liberty," was preserved at Wortham : an election squib, with the portrait of the popular hero. This appeared after Wilkes had been expelled from the House of Commons in 1764, for being the reputed author of the treasonable No. 45 of *The North Briton*.

Besides this squib, George Betts has left us nothing political, save a few newspaper cuttings of no importance.

On the other hand, he kept many papers describing the progress of the two great wars England was then waging in India and in Canada. After the fall of Quebec, the *London Chronicle* contained an article " on the importance of Canada," giving the parishes as 120, with 150 armed men in each. " In Quebec, 700, Trois River, 350, Montreal, 600, total 19,650 armed men." Wars and rumours of wars were then in every one's mouth ; " One is forced," wrote the flippant Horace Walpole, " to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one." The loss of Pondicherry, by breaking the French power in India, at length brought the end in sight ; and in 1761 Edmund Betts, writing from London, sent the joyful news, " We talk very much of peace."

It was a fighting age. In private society duels were frequent ; even the clergy did not always consider themselves exempt ; though when they did fight they were



the subject of much ridicule. George Betts, himself a parson, composed the following lines "on a late duel intended to have been fought in Barton Churchyard near Bury, between Mr T. H. and a clergyman, one Mr Rennery."

"A Dispute rose so high t'wixt Parson and Squire,  
That a Duel alone could extinguish their ire,  
The Militant Clerk every Canon defy'd,  
In each hand a Pistol and sword by his side.  
To make the more solemn this valourous deed,  
The scene, a Churchyard, was wisely decreed,  
For where could a Parson more properly go,  
For on his own dung hill what cock will not crow."

But the deadly encounter was happily averted ; discretion—

"In the shape of two friends came and parted each foe,  
And prevented—what neither desired to do."

In 1752 there was great agitation amongst the farmers and labourers against the excessively severe game laws, and papers were affixed to the doors of both Houses of Parliament, threatening to destroy all pheasant and partridge eggs, if the country gentlemen would not desist from "The Association for the better preservation of game." The rules of this Association, subscribed to by nearly all the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, are among the Wortham papers ; but to their honour be it said, that the names of neither George nor Edmund Betts appear among the list of members.

In 1748, a Book Club had been inaugurated among the gentry round Wortham, which held monthly meetings on the Tuesday after the full moon at the Crown Inn, Botesdale. George Betts was a member of this club. He

also belonged to another similar club which was organized at Diss a few years later. Among the original members of the Diss Club were Edmund Betts and his brother-in-law Thomas Deye, Rowland Holt<sup>1</sup> of Redgrave, William Evans, rector of Wortham, and Thomas Martin of Palgrave. Martin's "History of Thetford," left unfinished at the author's death, was later subscribed for by the club.

George Betts, as a magistrate for both Norfolk and Suffolk, kept a book in which he entered all his cases, several of which are of interest, as illustrating laws now happily obsolete. Obligatory statute labour on roads, begun as we have seen in Philip and Mary's reign, was still enforced. Servants were hired by the year and could not be dismissed, even for a fault; nor could they leave until formal complaint had been made before a magistrate. Here is an instance :—

"Be it remembered, that on the 15th day of March 1764, Mr John Brown of the parish of Hinderclay and Michael Rate, his servant, came before me one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and mutually agreed to release each other as master and servant as witness their hands." Signed "George Betts." Another case is that of a master, who having hired a servant at Michaelmas for a year at £2, 2s. 6d., now came to complain that the man refused to rise at reasonable hours.

This man was a farm servant, judging by the rate of wages, for at that time George Bett's footman received

<sup>1</sup> Rowland Holt, elected M.P. for Suffolk in the room of Sir Cordel Firebrace in 1759, withdrew in 1767, when he failed to be nominated at Stowmarket. Nicknamed "Tyrant of Manors" for too strictly enforcing his manorial rights.

£7 a year, the gardener, £11, the three maids, £5 a year each, and a boy, £2.

The minute books of the Quarter Sessions at Ipswich for 1764 record an act of George Betts, to which deservedly honourable mention has been given by the authors of "English Local Government:—" "At a time when no ordinary Justice dreamt of visiting the fever haunted prisons—ten years before John Howard set a memorable example to the world—we find the Rev<sup>nd</sup> George Botts,<sup>1</sup> a Suffolk Justice, representing to Quarter Sessions that the House of Correction at Botesdale was in a shocking state, getting himself formally deputed to report what steps should be taken, and inducing his fellow-justices, not only to provide materials on which to set the prisoners to work, but also to pay an increased salary to the keeper, on condition that he abandoned the taking of fees."

It was not till twenty-five years after George Betts' death that Justices were enjoined to visit the Bridewells four times a year. His good work at Botesdale was one of his last public acts. He died suddenly on the 21st of March 1766, at the age of forty-seven, intestate, and was buried beside his wife in the Chancel of Wortham Church.

His brother Edmund Betts became guardian of the orphaned boy George; and little Anne the only other child, was taken charge of by her grandmother, the now widowed Mrs Shuckford.

In 1765, came the end by way of compromise of a curious Chancery suit between members of the Deye family. It will be remembered that Mrs Edmund Betts was Martha daughter of Nathaniel Deye. The Stayer

<sup>1</sup> Erroneously spelled by Mr and Mrs Webb, but correctly entered—Betts—in the minute books.



MARY, WIFE OF THE REVD. SAMUEL SHUCKFORD, D.D., CHAPLAIN TO  
KING GEORGE II. PREBENDARY OF CANTERBURY, ETC.





House estate already mentioned had been the property of Thomas Deye, brother of Nathaniel. He had left two only daughters, Dioness and Mary, and his nearest male relative was his nephew Thomas brother of Martha Betts.

On the death of their father Dioness and Mary had without question retained his estate. Their cousin Thomas was rector of Palgrave and was about to be married. To prepare his marriage settlement he employed an attorney named Negus.

On a morning came this Mr Negus to Palgrave on business, and in the course of conversation casually asked Thomas Deye what he would give if he helped him to £1000. On Mr Deye carelessly promising £100, Negus informed him that he had discovered that the title of his cousins Dioness and Mary to the Stayer House estate was invalid, and that the property rightfully belonged to him ; adding that as his cousins were in possession, it would be very costly and difficult to prove this ; but that he, Negus, had no doubt that he could persuade the ladies to make Mr Deye a compliment of £1000, if he relinquished all claim.

Thomas Deye naturally hesitated, and the matter rested for a week or so ; then Mr Negus came again to Palgrave, stated that he had mentioned the affair to Dioness and Mary, and showed Thomas the form of a letter which he had drawn up, purporting to be addressed by Thomas to Dioness the elder sister. To persuade Thomas to sign this letter, he represented that, as Thomas " well knew, his cousin Dioness was of a fretful capricious temper, and the suspense was injuring her health ; and so, knowing his clients indolence, he had himself prepared

the letter for his signature." The letter purported to surrender to his cousins all Thos. Deye's rights on consideration of his receiving £1000.

The Reverend Thomas, being as his counsel afterwards put it, then "warm in liquor, and at the same time in a hurry to take the service in church it being Sunday, signed the letter without reading it; confiding in Mr Negus' friendship for him." But afterwards, on more sober thoughts, and influenced by his wife's counsel, for he was now married, he went into the matter afresh, and, on discovery of the real facts of the case, "publicly repudiated the pretended agreement at Eye Assembly."

Now, the actual facts were these, Dioness and Mary Deye, who had lately come of age, had wished to make a partition of their landed property, and for this purpose had laid the title-deeds of the Stayer House estate before Mr Negus. He discovered thereby, that in the marriage settlement of Nathaniel Deye and Mary Cooper, the sister's grandparents, the Stayer House estate had been settled on their father, in tail male; and that the ladies therefore could not inherit. He communicated this discovery to the sisters; and they empowered him as their attorney to go to their unsuspecting cousin, and get him to relinquish his rights, in the manner and for the price before mentioned. The sisters could not plead necessity, as they, exclusive of the Stayer House, had each £5000 a handsome fortune in those days. They could only urge that their father must have been ignorant of the terms of the settlement, or he would certainly have barred the entail, and so have enabled himself to leave the property to them, his only children.

As to Negus, he is said to have publicly declared, when heated by a dispute with a certain Mr Malyns, rector of Eye, and Miss Deye's uncle, "that he would not have drawn Deye in to give up his right for £1000, but on account of his own nephew's courting Miss Mary Deye, for that this would make her the better fortune." In point of fact, this nephew, Henry Negus, was secretly engaged at that time to Mary Deye.

To avoid "treading ye labyrinth of Chancery" Thomas offered to end the suit with his cousins by paying them £1000 each, but this offer they indignantly refused. In the end the suit was compromised on far more unfavourable terms for them.

Thomas d'Eye, in order to acquire power of disposition over the estate, barred the entail, by suffering a "common recovery." He had to make a legal entry on the land, proceeding thus:—"To go upon each respective farm or holding—and not enter the house but upon the land—and take up a clod of earth and say—'By virtue of this clod of earth I Thomas D'Eye—this day of — 1761 make an actual entry and take possession of all the lands etc.'"

The legal business had been kept as much as possible in the family, by employing as attornies Mr Jehoshaphat Postle Edmund's brother-in-law, and Mr Buxton of Norwich; and as counsel Mr Anguish who was connected with the Betts of Yoxford, and Mr William de Grey, a Cambridge friend of Edmund's brother, George.

Thomas Deye, in the middle of the suit, had begun to sign his name with an apostrophe, a change which was thus noted by Jehoshaphat Postle in a letter to Mr Buxton:

“ Mr Deye out of some whim and caprice has chosen to write his name D’Eye, though all his ancestors wrote it Deye.” He also dropped his Christian name in his signature, and was in consequence nicknamed “ his Lordship ” in the family.

## CHAPTER XXIII

1756-1774

THE MONTHLY DINNER CLUB—COZ EDWARD THURLOW,  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—A WINDOW-TAX CASE

**I**N 1756, a club had been formed for a monthly meeting of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Diss. The rules provided that members should meet at the King's Head Diss, every Friday before the full moon, at two o'clock in the afternoon; the landlord James Simpson agreed to provide a good "dinner at 1s. head for the ordinary, and 1/6 a head for the extraordinary."

There were twenty members, among whom were George Betts president, Edmund Betts, Thos. D'Eye and Rowland Holt. Forfeits were imposed for non-attendance, and any member who dined there on club day alone, was entitled to claim 4s. or two bottles of port, to be paid for by the absent members. On November 18th 1768, it was entered in the Club book that Edmund Betts, then president, being the only member present, claimed three bottles of port, to be paid for by the majority of the Club at the next meeting. At the next meeting, however, this minute appears: "The Majority of the Club allow the president 2 bottles only, as having respect for his neck and his constitution, Dec. 23. 1768."

Their landlord's personal appearance was not always



pleasing; and the Club ordered that "unless James Simpson on every future Club Day, be clean shaved, have a powdered wig and a clean shirt, that he forfeit a bottle of port for every default."

In a letter to Jehoshaphat Postle, Thomas D'Eye gives us a description of a contemporary club at Palgrave. Thomas seems to have had no little reputation as a preacher, and having to preach at the Cathedral, had been asked to stay the night in Mr Postle's house at Norwich. He writes to excuse himself, and continues:—

"Last night was our Club night here in Palgrave, and with that oil of gladness as Shakespear has it, ye sweet oblivious antidote which purges ye foul bosom of ye perilous stuff which weighs upon ye heart, we dissipated every care, and caroused it o'er our bowls, till night's candles were burnt out, and jocound day stood tip-toe on ye misty mountain top; so was it that when wine has once made glad ye heart, we are in some degree like Romeo and his mistress; parting has such sweet sorrow, that we often say good night till it be morrow, and have no care to stay than will to go."

Of old, it was said that every man is allowed a different proportion of drink, which when he has despatched, there remains nothing for him but to die. Thomas D'Eye despatched all too soon the proportion allowed to him; "cheerful he played the trifle life away," and in the midst of his years paid the penalty.

During the progress of the Chancery proceedings, Edmund and Martha Betts made several visits to London, on one occasion breaking their journey at the house of Mr Jenney in Ipswich. Edmund Jenney was an old

friend of the Betts, having been brought up by his uncle Barnaby Gibson of Wortham. Barnaby had married Martha Cullum, an aunt of Martha Betts, which connection accounts for two letters having been kept at Wortham addressed to Mrs Barnaby Gibson. The head of the younger branch of the Cullums, Sir John Cullum squire of Hawsted, in order to help his son who was then "innocently amusing himself by compiling a history of his native place," wrote to his cousin Mrs Gibson for particulars of the Eye branch of the Cullum family. "It is," he wrote, "a mere matter of curiosity which most persons have, of knowing as much as they can of the Family to which they belong." The information she supplied him with, later appeared in his son's book the "History of Hawstead."

The columns of the *Ipswich Journal* for Feb. 18 1764, advertise "a new Flying Machine," to accommodate passengers from Norwich to London, by way of Scole Inn, Needham Market, Bramford, Copdock, etc., each passenger to pay one pound two shillings and to be allowed 14 lbs. weight of luggage. Jehoshaphat Postle speaks, in one of his letters, of going to London by this "Machine," and wishes Edmund Betts in his turn "much diversion in town with health, spirits and cash to enjoy it." Passengers from Oakley or Wortham would have to drive to Scole to meet the "Flying Machine"; no swiftly gliding aëroplane, but a cumbrous coach crawling along the dusty roads.

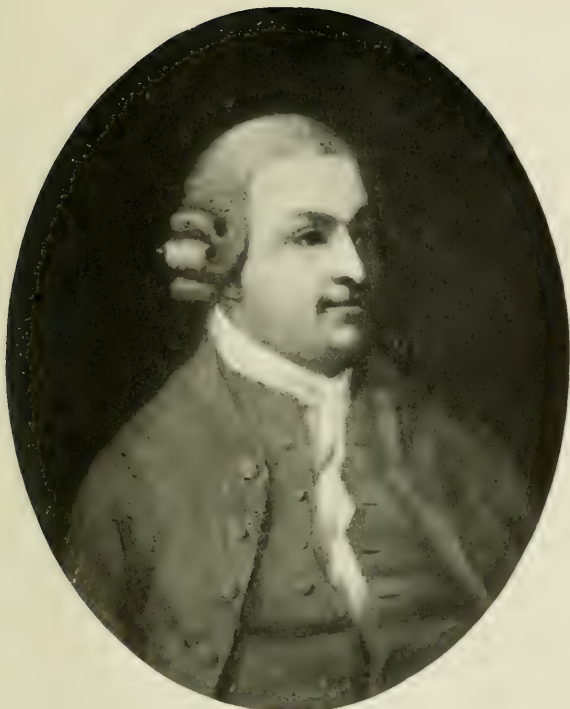
Sometimes Mr and Mrs Betts would post all the way to London in their own new chariot, which Edmund had himself brought from London a year or two before. Of the chariot when new, his irrespressible brother-in-law

Thomas D'Eye wrote as follows to Jehosaphat Postle: "This dull county affords no news worthy of your attention. The most important is that Edmund arrived at Oakley on Sunday night in his new chariot, a very neat one indeed. I went to pay him a visit on Monday, and never was ye sympathy between ye animal spirits and ye breeches pocket more remarkably display'd than in ye lines of Mun's serious countenance."

This letter was found at Wortham, and likewise a bill of a certain "John Smith coachmaker in St. Martin's Lane near the Strand, London," which had been ruefully discharged by "Mun" before he left London, the total, including a postilion saddle, being £89, 8s. 6d. The chariot is described in the bill as having carved hind standards and spring locks, mahogany shutters, a small seat to fold inside the other seat, best plate glass, a trunk under the seat, and carpet to the bottom, the whole "painted a fine brown, with shields of arms, and all the framework gilt."

The great outbreak of smallpox in East Anglia, which at this time drove people to flee for their lives, is alluded to in Edmund Betts' letters. Norwich was attacked, and in February 1762, Edmund writes to congratulate his relations there on their recovery. In May, it was still raging, for writing then to invite his sister Mrs Postle, Edmund says: "Our Post Chariot shall meet her anywhere she pleases. My man have not had the smallpox or else he should come to Norwich."

The family at Oakley were to suffer, and Mrs Postle in her turn congratulates Edmund on his children's recovery, "which," she says, "we esteem as a very happy event."



EDMUND BETTS OF OAKLEY  
1719-1788





The portraits painted some years later, of Edmund Betts' daughters, show no marks of the dread disease, so prevalent during the eighteenth century, that only to possess a face unpitted by smallpox was considered a sufficient claim to beauty.

In August 1773, Edmund Betts brought his nephew George to the Diss Club Dinner, and got him elected president for the ensuing year—"Nunky having agreed," runs the minute in the club-book, "to take the chair during his nephew's residence at Oxford."

George had then been at Christchurch for more than two years. Martha Betts had an influential cousin, an Oxford Don, which was probably the reason why her husband chose Oxford rather than the East Anglian University for his nephew and ward. Mrs Betts' cousin at Oxford, the Rev. Thomas Thurlow, was then fellow of Magdalen, and later bishop successively of Lincoln and Durham. His grandfather, another Thomas Thurlow, had been that rector of Wortham who in the days of William and Mary was, as we have seen, condemned to stand in the pillory for drinking a disloyal toast at a Jacobite meeting at Botesdale.

When George Betts was at Oxford, a certain Mr Bixley solicited Mrs Edmund Betts' interest with her cousin Thomas Thurlow; but she being better acquainted with Edward Thurlow the future Lord Chancellor than with his clerical brother, wrote first to him. His answering letter, written the year after he had been made Attorney-General, shows nothing of the rude manner generally attributed to him, or perhaps Martha would not so carefully have preserved it.

" DEAR COUSIN,

The moment I received your commands, I set myself to obey them with all that attention and alacrity which your commands are entitled to exact. I have sent your letter to my brother, and desired him to do his best. He will learn from that, that one Mr Bixley desires to be Fellow of Magdalen, and that Mrs Betts is of the same mind, and I hope Mr Bixley will be ready to explain to him, what pretensions he has, and how my Brother can serve him. He can't be chosen unless he be a Demi as they call it ; nor to any fellowship, but of the division to which he belongs, unless there are no such in College ; and which is worse, I guess he wants to be elected in place of my Brother, in which case he will have no vote. Now if any of these articles should stand in his way, I beg you will be assured, that it be will be because I can't tell how to remove them. As you put off your journey to Oxford last time, only till you could find a reason to go, why not take this opportunity and canvass for your friend in person ?

" I am

Dear Cousin  
with perfect regard  
your most obedient Servant  
E. THURLOW.

" INNER TEMPLE

*Wednesday, February 5, 1772."*

In 1773, Harriot, Edmund Betts' youngest child a girl of fourteen, was taken seriously ill, and young George at Oxford was "truly concerned to hear it." I hope by this time," he writes, "she is again better, I shall be glad to

hear as often as I conveniently can ; my aunt almost and Molly absolutely promised they would write." The news of the burning of Henham Hall had just been published ; and George continues : " I am sorry to hear Sir John Rous has met with so great a loss, I see by the newspapers the damage which is done is computed at thirty thousand pounds."

Writing to his uncle during the Easter vacation, George describes a driving tour he had enjoyed with two other undergraduates : " I wish," he says, " you could have been with us at Bedford, we met with the most facetious Landlord I ever saw. We ordered some Punch, and intended to have gone to bed at ten, but just as our bowl was out, up came the landlord and almost insisted on our having a bottle of wine that we might taste it ; Fisher and Mountain made no objection, and if I say I did, you would not believe me. Just before we finished that, he praised some old wine which he had had 8 or 9 years in Bottles ; we ordered a Bottle of that. Before that was finished, he would have us go into his Cellars, and very convenient they were and very well stocked with Liquor. We could not think of coming up empty handed, in short he made us sit with him till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past two and exceedingly diverted we were. Dismal roads across the Country—mem : never to come that way again in a Post Chaise. You shall soon hear from me again, but at present I do assure you I am busy, for on Monday I have an Examination to pass through. Pray give my duty to my Aunt. Love to Molly, Harriot, and Co."

The letter begins " Dear Sir " and ends " your dutiful nephew," after the fashion of our ancestors, whose utmost affection was masked under the stiffest terms.

Young George's next letter, dated nearly a month afterwards, expresses his sorrow at hearing of his cousin Harriot's death. "No one," he writes, "can feel more real concern than I do on this occasion, as in her I have lost a sister (for I always esteem'd my cousins as sisters)." He goes on to assure his uncle that he never should be able to return "half the Obligations I have received from you, but altho' I never shall be able to return them, they will always remain deeply imprinted in my mind. When I prove in any degree ungrateful to you, I ought to be drove from all society whatever." George concludes his letter by sending his "Duty to his aunt, and love to Molly and Mrs Worth." Martha, the eldest daughter of Edmund Betts, had then recently married John Worth, surgeon and apothecary of Diss.

On the 13th of February 1773, *Chase's Paper* published at Norwich, contains the following notice: "On Sunday morning last died Mrs Burroughes, aged 83, relict of Jeremiah Burroughes late of Wymondham Esqre., deceased, and formerly the wife of Edmund Betts of Wortham in Suffolk Esqre.; her piety, charity, affability and gentleness of manner rendered her esteemed and exemplary in life, lamented in death." Anne Betts was living with her grandmother Mrs Burroughes at the time of her death; Mrs Shuckford her maternal grandmother with whom she had previously lived having died a few months before. Mrs Burroughes left directions that she should be buried in Wortham Church beside her "first husband Betts."

Smallpox was then still prevalent in Norwich, as appears from Mr Soley's refusal to accompany the funeral cortège from Norwich. "I am at present," he wrote, "in good



health, and mean to attend in my own chaise at the hour appointed, being afraid to travel in a mourning coach, perhaps often used by persons infected with the small-pox."

Fifty-three relations and friends were provided with hatbands and gloves; among them Humfrey Rant the deceased lady's nephew, and his daughter and son-in-law the Rev<sup>nd</sup> Seymour and Mrs Leeke of Yaxley Hall.

Edmund Betts was the sole executor; and among his accounts, is the affidavit of Sarah Puggin the nurse, that the deceased was not "buried in any shirt, shift, sheet, or shroud, made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or other than what is made of sheeps wool only."

Mrs Burroughes left all her unsettled property to Edmund Betts, and her three daughters Mrs Soley, Mrs Postle, and Mrs Mary Betts.

Acting no doubt on his uncle's advice, young George bought all his grandmother's plate and her pewter (pewter being then still in general use) from his uncle and aunts.

George's diary shows how pleasantly he passed his time during his vacations, flitting from one neighbour's house to another, and attending the local theatres. Here are two typical entries. "Dined at Mr Holts, supped at Mrs Goldsmiths, went to the play at Brome." "Dined at Thrandeston Fair, went to a play at Brome." At other times he would attend Eye, Bungay, Bury or Norwich theatres, or go to Hingham bowling green to play bowls with Sir Armine Wodehouse. Regularly two or three times a week, he would dine or sup with Lord



Cornwallis ; and distance did not deter him from riding the eighteen miles to Norwich, to dine with the Postles and then back to sup at Oakley.

It must be remembered that the fashionable dinner hour was in those days between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Supper, a light meal, might be at any time in the evening ; indeed, we read of one family whose regular supper hour was eleven at night. But that was in London, and such late hours would not have found favour with the early rising country squires.

In May 1773, George Betts came of age, and in 1774 took his B.A. degree. He also placed his name on the law list," not that he meant to practice law, for the same year he was ordained deacon at Christchurch, Oxford.

The window tax was then still in force. Among the Betts papers for 1773 is the statement of the case of one Nathaniel Pinborough of Diss and others. It concerned surcharges made on dairy and cheese-chamber lights, which, not being mentioned in the Act, the commissioners, Sheppard Frere,<sup>1</sup> Samuel Carter, and C. Simpson, were of opinion should be exempted. The surveyor thought otherwise ; and the case was sent to the King's Bench, and decided against the householders by twelve judges, among whom were Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, Sir William Blackstone the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Sir Beaumont Hotham an ancestor of the writer, and Sir William de Grey, who had been counsel for Edmund Betts in the Deye Chancery suit.

An assessment of 1703 for the window tax on several parishes round Wortham was preserved by the Betts ;

<sup>1</sup> Sheppard Frere of Roydon, grandfather of Rt. Hon Hookham Frere, and great grandfather of Sir Bartle Frere.

the duty had since that date been frequently increased. For instance in 1766, the year's tax on the forty-three lights in Wortham Manor was twenty-five shillings altogether, but when the Diss case was heard in 1773, no less than two shillings a year was demanded for each light.

## CHAPTER XXIV

1775-1783

### DETAILS SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC—PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF A LIGHTHOUSE—ARCHBISHOP CORNWALLIS

**O**N November 16, 1775, George Betts married his cousin Molly.

There are indications that for some time George had no longer "esteem'd his cousin as a sister," but as "something more than kin," though not "less than kind." His diary records sundry gifts of trinkets, and trifling articles of dress such as girls love, and playful bets lost to Molly; so that when the entries of payments for licence, parson, and ringers are reached, it causes no surprise. The marriage took place at Oakley, "in the little grey church on the windy hill," and the young couple, it would seem, went straight to their home at Wortham, for there is no account in the diary of a wedding tour. Honeymoons spent in travel had not then come into fashion.

Among the Betts portraits, is one of Molly painted just after her marriage, a gentle girlish face, her light brown unpowdered hair rolled back over a cushion. The portraits of her mother and sister, painted at the same time, show them wearing enormous erections of powdered hair. Such "heads" took a skilled hand hours to erect, and were not taken down for days at a time; even for



MARY (MOLLY) DAUGHTER OF EDMUND BETTS OF OAKLEY,  
WIFE OF THE REV. GEORGE BETTS OF WORTHAM





three weeks, it was considered by our ancestresses "that, a head could well go in summer without being opened!"

The portrait, painted the same year, of Edmund Betts, represents him wearing a short powdered wig, a fashion which the older men still clung to; though it appears by a petition of peruke makers to the King that wigs had been going out for the last ten years; they complained of the decline of their trade through gentlemen wearing their own hair. Edmund's nephew George never wore a wig, but, after the fashion of the young bucks, tied back his own pomatumed and powdered locks with a black ribbon.

The year after his marriage, George was ordained priest, and a few months later was appointed curate of Shelf-hanger and Bressingham, places some miles apart. The Rev<sup>nd</sup> Randall Burroughes, a stepson of George's grandmother the late Mrs Burroughes, was his rector in both parishes.

George Betts' diary gives us an interesting picture of the life of a country gentleman's family in the eighteenth century. Anne Betts, two years younger than the bride, lived with her brother and sister-in-law at Wortham. The ladies had the newest romances from the Botesdale Book Club; we find in the Book list, "Evelina," "The Vicar of Wakefield," Dr Goldsmith's "School for Scandal," Mrs Radcliffe's "Female Advocate," and so forth. For more serious reading, George brought back "An Account of Corsica," by Frederick son of Theodore King of Corsica, "Journey to ye Western Isles of Scotland," by the author of "Ye Rambler," and Young's "Agriculture." This last book was specially procured by the Club at George Betts'

request ; agriculture was a subject in which he was interested, for he continued to farm the home farm like his forefathers.

The ladies had their riding horses, and neighbours for miles round constantly met at each other's houses. " Commerce," and " All Fours " were fashionable games, ten or fifteen shillings lost or gained at cards is a weekly entry in the diary.

" The play " at Norwich, Bury, Eye, and Bungay was much patronized ; the Betts family would attend in their own chaise, purchased for £79 soon after George's marriage. According to the coach-builder's bill, which was at Wortham, it was lined with light-coloured cloth trimmed with lace, a turkey carpet to the bottom. The body was painted a light colour with purple ovals bordered round ; and adorned with the Betts' arms and crest. A big trunk for fastening behind the chaise, harness, and two postilion saddles were included. George had two postilions, one of whom also acted as footman ; their wages were six guineas a year, a fustian frock and waistcoat, and a pair of leather breeches ; one had besides a suit of footman's livery, for indoor work.

Every year or so brought a new baby to Wortham. The first a son born in 1777, died two days after his birth ; his place was filled next year by a daughter, Martha. In September 1779, George's diary records the christening feast of another daughter Elizabeth, for which occasion " a fish was purchased from Mr Frere of Roydon, for nineteen shillings. Can it be that salmon then came up the sluggish Waveney ? A leg of mutton, bought for half a crown, also graced the christening dinner. The deposed baby was now supplied with a " child's coach,"

for a guinea, a cumbrous vehicle on four wheels which had to be drawn, not pushed.

Scores of sermons in George Betts' writing testify to his clerical activity ; among them is one preached at Bressingham "on the Fast Day, Friday 27 February 1778." The King's proclamation is with the sermon, and probably was first read from the pulpit. "We, taking into our most serious consideration the just and necessary hostilities in which we are engaged, and the unnatural rebellion carrying on in some of our Provinces and Colonies of North America, hereby command that a Public Fast and Humiliation be observed." This war must have evoked particular interest in the district, as in it George Betts' neighbour and friend Charles first Marquis Cornwallis played a conspicuously disastrous part.

In 1781, George went to stay in London with his relative Lord Thurlow, a stormy advocate of the King's American policy ; and while there, went to see Copley's famous picture of the tragically sudden death of Lord Chatham while making his great appeal in the House against England's abandonment of the American Colonies.

In London, George purchased two lottery tickets for £26 ; half of one ticket he sold to his friend Mr Frere, and shared the other with "his mother Mrs Edmund Betts" ; the first of these gained a prize of £20. State lotteries had for long been a regular source of revenue ; the annual profit to the Government averaging about three hundred and fifty thousand pounds. They were drawn at the Guildhall, and later at Cooper's Hall, the tickets being taken from the wheel by the Blue Coat boys.

This year, a son was born to George Betts, and baptized George ; he was the first son who survived his infancy,

and the eighth successive Betts, if we include the infant who only lived two days, to bear the Christian name of George.

Mrs Humfrey Rant's death followed close on the birth of this child. She left her estates in Norfolk to her cousin Edmund Betts and Mr Hasell of Ipswich, in trust for her daughter Mrs Seymour Leeke, who was unhappily married and had separated from her husband.

At Mrs Leeke's death the estates in Overstrand and Mendling were to pass to George Betts ; while the lands at Dickleburgh were to go to Edmund, with remainder to his grandson John Worth, now an orphan. Mr Hasell had acted as Mrs Rant's agent for some years before her death, and his letters to Edmund Betts regarding her property are extant.

To the ancient soil of England still cling immemorial customs of which the names, though sometimes happily not the substance, yet survive. Mrs Rant, as lady of the manor of Overstrand, enjoyed the right of shipwreck. This right was claimed to be included in his lease by one of her tenants there, a man called Howes. Not wishing to relinquish it, she consulted Mr Hasell, who told her that "the little advantage that had accrued to her on that score for many years past, should induce her to let the tenant have the whole right of wrecks." No doubt there was "little advantage" to be gained from this feudal right. Mrs Rant received, however, for many years, dues from ships which passed safely, guided by light from a lighthouse which her father had built, and which was her own property.

The history of this lighthouse is unfolded in the Betts' papers. The original structure stands no longer, but its



successor still guides mariners along the dangerous coast of Cromer and Overstrand.

It appears that in 1717, Nathaniel Life, father of Mrs Rant, and brother-in-law of the then Edmund Betts of Wortham, built at his own cost a lighthouse on the heath land between Cromer and Overstrand. Two years later, with the help of one Edward Bowell master mariner, a younger brother of the Trinity House, he obtained a patent for lighting the "shell," and granting to himself and Bowell jointly, one farthing per ton from every ship passing the light, and a halfpenny for every chaldron of Newcastle coal carried. The Trinity House acquired the ownership of the site, and Life and Bowell became their tenants under a lease for the term of sixty-one years, at a rent of £100 per annum, this rent being thus secured to the Trinity House "without their having been at a shilling of expense." The term expired the year before Mrs Rant's death, when the lighthouse with "the acre of land whereon it was builded" reverted to the Trinity House.

This "Foulness Light" must have been one of the earliest of our lighthouses, and its light was probably a mere beacon fire of coal. Twenty years after its erection there were only five-and-twenty lighthouses on all the coasts of England, a great many of which likewise owed their origin to private enterprise.

As to another ancient custom the right of lords of manors to a "heriot"—the best beast, or its money value, due on the death or alienation of a tenant—a dispute arose. It is worth referring to, if only as showing the change of prices which had taken place in fifty-nine years. Now, in 1781, ten guineas was demanded for a "heriot" by the steward of a manor in respect of property of which Mrs



Rant had been a copyhold tenant. In 1722, when her husband had been admitted to the same tenement, only thirteen shillings and fourpence in lieu of the "heriot" had been paid.'

The trustees had also to deal with other property besides land. Mrs Rant had held two mortgages on the Scole turnpike, which the trustees disposed of later. Such mortgages secured on the tolls seem to have been regarded as ordinary investments, for Mr Postle inquires, "whether they are above or under par." Turnpikes when vacant were put up to auction, the highest bidder having the right to the profits, after deducting the rent. The rate of the tolls was fixed by law.

In the accounts of Mrs Rant's executors, the carriage of letters amounts to a goodly sum. Village carriers took local letters; but for longer distances the so-called post boy had to be employed. Such a man riding alone with the mails might fall an easy, sometimes perhaps a willing, prey to highwaymen. To guard against such robberies Edmund Betts transmitted money in bank bills cut in halves, which he posted on different days, sometimes sending them by the stage-coach, a safer but more expensive way than by the government post boy. A letter by coach from Oakley to London then cost a shilling.

In 1785, a much-needed reform was instituted. That year, the first mail coach carrying letters and inside passengers started from Norwich to London. The fare was higher, but then the security was greater, for on the top of the scarlet and gold coach sat a scarlet and gold guard armed with pistol and blunderbuss, the mail coaches being licensed to carry arms, which the stage-coaches were not.

Owners of stage-coaches published inflammatory paragraphs against the mail coaches, predicting fearful accidents, and deaths by apoplexy, in consequence of the mail's excessive speed—their contracts obliging them to travel at the rate of eight miles an hour, including stoppages.

In the spring of 1783, Archbishop Cornwallis, Primate of All England, died. He it was who, as the Hon. and Rev. Frederick Cornwallis, had married Edmund and Martha Betts in 1749. The promise he then made to the bridegroom and bride, though not forgotten, had not been fulfilled, and Edmund, now that his friend was no more, wrote this letter to Mrs Cornwallis, his widow :—

“ MADAM

I sincerely condole with you on the very great and heavy loss you have so lately sustained. The very particular Respect with which my late friend honoured me with, will I hope apologize for the trouble I have given you, as I thought it a Duty I owed my family to state some particulars with which I hope you are not altogether unacquainted.

“ When the Archbishop married Mrs. Betts and me, he told us whatever sons we should have, if we brought them up to the Church, he would provide for them. About four years since, I had the honour of dining with him at Lambeth, when his Grace mentioned this promise of his own accord, and enquired about my family. I then told him I had no son, but my nephew had married my daughter, was in orders, had no preferment, and I begged he would be kind enough to look upon him as my son, which he told me he certainly would do, and would give

him some preferment very soon, and at that time mention'd an option he had in the Diocese of Rochester. About two years since my nephew Mr G. Betts waited upon his Grace with a letter from me ; the Archbishop then told him, he certainly would provide for him, and that he had been for a considerable time upon his list. I thought it proper to state these particulars to you, as I am certain, as far as it lies in your Power, you would be happy to fulfill any promise the Archbishop ever made ; I should be happy to hear from you that you excuse the Liberty I have taken in thus troubling you and am Madam

“ Your most obedient humble servt.

EDM<sup>d</sup>. BETTS.

“ P.S. Mrs Betts desires her compliments.

*Oakley 26th April 1783.*

To Mrs Cornwallis at Lambeth House.”

The Archbishop's widow probably had no power to carry out her husband's promise ; when in 1787 preferment came to George Betts in the shape of the living of West Winch, it was by the presentation of the Lord Chancellor Thurlow.

The beginnings of the modern “ week end ” parties may be traced back to Archbishop Cornwallis ; for his routs and card parties on Saturday night were, it was whispered, often prolonged into Sunday morning ; and young King George urged thereto by Lady Huntingdon, actually wrote to the offending Archbishop, to request that his Sunday parties should be discontinued.

## CHAPTER XXV

1782-1786

### FARMING THE POOR OF WORTHAM—AN AIR BALLOON —HIRING FAIRS

**A**MONG the pages of George Betts' diary for 1782 is a paper of "proposals made by John Smith of Wortham, whitester,<sup>1</sup> offering to undertake "the whole charge of the poor of Wortham for three years to come, for the sum of nine hundred pounds, as they are in the Shipmeadow House, maintained in the same manner as they are now, he not to be obliged to keep either boys or girls turned of fourteen years of age."

At this time, country parishes had their own work-houses and relieved their own poor, sometimes farming out their responsibility to such contractors as John Smith; and they arranged to bind out pauper children "turned of fourteen years of age" as apprentices. It was however often difficult to induce a farmer or tradesman to take a parish child, at an age for mischief, but not for much work, into his house.

A present of five guineas is entered in George Betts' accounts, which he gave to R. Algar, one of his farm

<sup>1</sup> A whiteners of yarn. We find from the Preamble to a Statute of Henry VIII. that "lynen yarne had to lie out in the night for half a year to be whited."

tenants, over and above the sum Algar was to receive from the parish, for taking a "parish boy" as apprentice.

In 1782, a bad harvest had brought a winter of distress and discontent; and the diary records subscriptions all over England, for the purpose of buying corn and selling it at a low price to the starving poor. In January 1783, foreign supplies were found necessary, and two ships laden with wheat from Dantzic arrived in the Thames.

Many country town fêtes can now boast of a balloon ascent among their attractions; but when, nearly a hundred and thirty years ago, George Betts paid "a shilling to see an air balloon," it was accounted one of the wonders of the age, the greatest invention of the century. The pocket-book for the year 1783 in which he wrote his diary announces that "a method has been hit upon by two French philosophers the Sieurs Montgolfier, of constructing a light globe, which by being filled with inflammable air, will ascend towards the clouds: Many experiments are being made on this singular deviation from the laws of gravity."

This balloon was the Montgolfiers' third experiment, and was built by public subscription, and filled with hydrogen, then called Montgolfier gas; it ascended in the Champs de Mars before 30,000 spectators. The first balloon passengers were a sheep, a cock, and a duck.

Then, two Frenchmen adventured themselves, and according to the pocket-book were "suspended in a gallery" under the balloon, "provided with a stove and a quantity of straw to furnish a sufficiency of smoke; they passed over Paris at the height of 3000 feet."

On March 2 1784, M. Blanchard made an attempt with his improved "aerostatic machine, to which he had







affixed wings and a rudder, in order to work it horizontally and vertically against a current of air." The trial flight miscarried, owing to the violent temper of a pupil in the military school, who on M. Blanchard's refusal to allow him to accompany him, drew his sword and damaged the wings and rudder.

Another attempt was made in the same month, and proved successful. "MM. Marveau and Bertrand then ascended from Dijon, in a kind of gondola suspended to a balloon fitted with oars and rudder, and descended near Auxonne where they found a group of people kneeling in fear and adoration."

The last ascent recorded in the pocket-book was by M. Blanchard again, in his gas balloon from Rouen; "and by means of wings he moved in certain directions of the wind and could ascend and descend at pleasure."

In May 1784, Wortham was threatened with an epidemic of the dreaded smallpox, and three of the Betts' children were inoculated—George, Mary Anne, and Edmund the six months old baby. Twenty-five shillings each was charged for the operation. Though quite a quarter of a century had elapsed since its introduction by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, inoculation had only lately become general. Like many other beneficent discoveries, it was at first ignorantly opposed, one well-known preacher positively asserting that "Job's distemper was confluent smallpox, and that he had been inoculated by the devil."

The great feature of 1784 was "a good old fashioned winter." Snow fell on the seventh of October and, with only one intermission of twelve days at the end of January, the frost and snow continued for one hundred and seventy-seven days, till April 2 1785.

Soon after the breaking up of the great frost, George Betts' aunt Mrs Soley died, aged 70.

In the summer, George, while in London, paid another shilling to see "Leonardi ascend in a balloon from the artillery ground, and descend rapidly but safely in Totten Court Road through the bursting of the machine." During this visit, he bought "buskins" (gaiters) for himself for seven shillings, and one pound six shillings worth of lace for his wife's cloak.

A shooting licence is entered in the accounts for the year under the title of "Game certificate"; and another new tax on servants is noted. This new duty revived in another form the tax on bachelors of William III.'s reign, for bachelors were now obliged to pay double duty on each servant, while the family man was in part excused. George Betts having five children, was allowed two maid-servants free; he had seven servants in all, and paid this year for two male and three female domestics.

The servant question even then agitated the minds of good housewives. Mary Betts possessed a book on "Domestic Management," and subscribed to the "Society for the encouragement of good servants." The author of "Domestic Management" professed to write both for servant and master. "Be strictly honest" is the first advice. "Thirteenpence halfpenny is called hangman's wages, because the law will condemn a man for stealing that sum."

Dean Swift had earlier in the century written a book on the same subject; and his sarcastic comments are quoted in Mary Betts' book, such as how to properly snuff a candle. "You may run the candle end against the wainscot, you may tread it out, you may hold it upside

down till choked with its own grease, or cram it into the socket of a candlestick ; you may whirl it about in your hand till it goes out ; you may spit on your finger and thumb and pinch it out ; the cook may run it into the meal tub ; the groom into a bin of oats, or a heap of litter ; anything is better than using the snuffers with tallow candles, and not closing them again if without a spring ; or you may blow it out and perfume the house with the smoke." It was indeed a veritable art to be able to extinguish a candle so that it left no smell or smoke. The book directs the servant " to snuff it properly, then to dip the point of the snuffers into the hot tallow, and to touch the top of the wick with it. This being warm runs down the wick and is a priming for fresh lighting." Easy lighting was a great advantage in the days of tinder boxes.

Then there are directions as to the cleaning of pewter plates and dishes, and a whole chapter is devoted to " the honours of the table." " Never," run the rules for the footman, " give a second glass of wine in a glass that has once been used ; always wait till the person has drunk, and take back the empty glass on your waiter. It is genteel to have thin gill glasses." The footman's duty attending his mistress out walking is defined, and that of the groom riding armed behind his master's chaise.

Domestic servants as well as farm hands were still usually hired by the year. Hiring fairs held yearly at Botesdale and Stoke Ash, villages near Wortham, were frequented by farm servants, clad in clean white smocks. Shepherds, ploughmen, waggoners would each have an emblem of their calling in their hats—a shepherd wool, a cowman hair, and a ploughman or waggoner whipcord. Girls wishing to be hired stood separate from the men,



not unlike cattle at a fair waiting for dealers. Red ribbons denoting a cook and blue streamers a housemaid. When a contract was concluded, earnest money was given, and the emblems exchanged for ribbons of all colours.

Servants lived hardly, and wages were, even allowing for the then greater purchasing power of money, extremely low. The Wortham cook had only £5 a year with her board, and the gardener £16 without board. Indoor servants then slept, as George Betts' accounts show, between sheets made of hemp cloth.

Life was what we of an ease-loving century would call hard; even the weather showed no mercy, and winter was winter with a vengeance. George Betts' diary for 15th January 1786 tells of the Wortham chaise, with his wife and sister inside, becoming so deeply embedded in a snow drift as to require the efforts of three men and a boy to dig it out.

The diary soon after records the death of a favourite. "My cropt horse died this year after fourteen years service." Mercifully the cruel fashion of cropping horses' ears is now past memory.

## CHAPTER XXVI

1788-1793

THREE GREAT RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES—MARTHA BETTS, ON  
A SERMON OF JOHN WESLEY—ENGLISH FRIENDS OF  
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

**I**T is hardly possible to review the life of George Betts—a clergyman of the Church of England—and yet to ignore the state of that Church, prior to the great religious revival of which he was an eye-witness.

It is generally believed that the eighteenth century was a period in our history which, according to one writer the Rev. W. H. Fitchett, was “exhausted of living religion, and black with every kind of wickedness.” This may be true of the main stream of life ; but there were backwaters, such as the quiet village of Wortham, where men and women were unostentatiously striving to raise the standard of living and encourage purity of ideals. That it was a coarse age cannot be denied ; and no doubt gentlemen, some parsons among them like one specimen we have seen, drank to excess, and gross jests and anecdotes may have raised many a rough laugh ; yet, judging by the light of the Betts papers, country gentlemen and clergy did their duty to the best of their ability, loved truth and honour, and acted justly by their neighbours.

Among other agencies for good, in which the Betts

family took their part, were three great societies: "the Society for Distributing Good Books among the Poor" (now known as the S.P.C.K.), the original proposals of which, dated 1698, were among the Wortham papers; the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel"; and the now forgotten "Society for the Reformation of Manners." George Betts, following the example of his grandfather Dr Shuckford, belonged to all these Societies. The Rev. George Doughty, contemporary with Dr Shuckford, and an ancestor of a later generation of Betts, was also among the most enthusiastic and early supporters of the S.P.C.K. A great advocate for the spread of education, George Doughty founded before 1712, and himself supported a village school in his parish of Martlesham. He also, together with three likeminded friends, made a joint-subscription to the S.P.C.K., and they formed themselves into a local committee for distributing the books procured from the Society. George Doughty's letters to the S.P.C.K., written during the years 1712 to 1721, have been preserved in his family.

The original proposals for founding the "Society for the Reformation of Manners" were also at Wortham. They are dated 1694; and in them the founders mournfully complain "that our light looks like the evening of the world"—a cry which has often since been repeated, and which will be repeated while the world endures.

Preaching nearly a hundred years later to a still more disobedient and gainsaying generation, John Wesley too, felt assured that the end could not be far. Mrs Edmund Betts made a memorandum in her pocket-book of a sermon of his which had evidently deeply impressed her. "Mr John Wesley," she wrote, "preached



MARTHA, WIFE OF EDMUND BETTS OF OAKLEY





in the Parish Church of Bradford in Wiltshire on Sunday 4th of May 1788. His text was : ' the end of all things is at hand, be sober and watch unto prayer.' In his sermon, he assured the audience that the world would be at an end in the year 1856 ; but he said a new world would succeed to the old one, far better and infinitely more enlightened than the present, in which there would be no false teachers, no sly hypocrites, but universal holiness and angelic purity."

Poor Martha Betts ! The end, not of the world, but of her happy married life, was at hand. In September 1788, her husband died at the age of 69.

Edmund Betts was buried in a vault he had himself made in the chancel of Oakley Church, beside his first wife Sarah Cooke, and his brother-in-law the erratic Thomas D'Eye. The slabs which marked their resting-place have since been removed by some rector ignorant and careless of the past, and placed outside the east end of the Church, where rain and weather have nearly obliterated the arms and inscriptions. " My Mother gave me five guineas to pay for a suit of mourning " is the only allusion to his uncle's death in George Betts' diary.

Public events were now exciting a great deal of attention. The unrest in France was the chief talk of the day ; and at the fall of the Bastille in July 1789, there were great rejoicings in Norwich. At the beginning of next year, however, attention was diverted from foreign affairs by the approach of the general election. George Betts took an active part in this election, and kept all the newspaper accounts of it.

The Parliamentary candidates for the two Suffolk seats were, on the Tory side Sir John Rous the old member,

and Sir Charles Bunbury ; on the Whig side Sir Gerard Vanneck late member for Dunwich.

The election was fought on the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which had originally, in the reign of Charles II., been designed to prevent Roman Catholics holding office under the Crown. In 1790, all danger from the Roman Catholic party had long ceased ; and the acts pressed heavily on the Protestant Dissenter, who could hold no government office of profit or trust, civil or military, without producing a certificate that he had received the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, within three months after his appointment.

The Tories, at this election, raised the cry " the Church is in danger " ; while the Whigs professed to regard the sacramental test as an offence, not only to Nonconformists, but also to pious Churchmen both clergy and laity.

The candidates' political opinions were derided somewhat profanely by a parody of the Athenasian Creed :— " Sir John is a Pittite, and Sir Charles is a Foxite, and tho' of different political interests they are one body. Sir Charles is a Foxite and Sir Gerard is a Foxite, Yet they are not of one mind, etc." This, being interpreted, meant that Sir John Rous and Sir Charles Bunbury, though hitherto belonging to different parties, were on this occasion united for the purpose of opposing the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts ; while Sir Gerard Vanneck was in favour of the repeal. Bitter was the newspaper controversy, and personalities were rife.

Sir John Rous, termed by the Whigs Sir John Weathercock, was addressed thus : " When you were first chosen, knowing your breed, and the man that broke you in, we took you for a staunch young Tory ; but when you put up

the game of America to our utter surprise we found you a Whig. What we therefore now wish to be told is, how long your present Toryism will last? Whether your political fits be regular in their accesses, and your blowing hot and cold be periodic like the trade winds?"

"The father of Sir J. R.," runs another paragraph, "was at Southwold in company with Col. Boyde, a rebel in the year '45; and when inspired by the rosy god, they drank their sentiments freely to '*Charley over the Water*,' and in their madness enforced some Custom House officers to do the same, and ill-treated those who refused to comply."

The Tories retorted to these personalities by some doggerel lines on Sir Gerard, the Whig candidate:—

"Let Mynheer Vanneck go to his Dutchmen,  
We have better members here;  
Men of Suffolk don't want such men,  
For Rous and Bunbury cheer, boys, cheer."

Sir Gerard Vanneck's parliamentary silence was also a matter of reproach; he is represented as thus addressing his constituents:—

"For twenty long years I have been independent,  
In the Senate a silent and constant attendant,  
If to me for such service your votes you accord,  
I shall first be your member, and then be a lord."<sup>1</sup>

George Betts, a personal friend of Sir John Rous as well as an ardent Tory, was one of the first to join the Hartismere Committee for canvassing the county in his support.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Gerard died in 1791, and was succeeded by his brother Sir Joshua, who in 1796 was created a peer of Ireland by the title of Baron Huntingfield.

George's family was now rapidly increasing ; since his father-in-law's death in 1788, three more children had been added to the nursery: Harriet born in 1787; Thomas D'Eye named after his eccentric great-uncle, born two years later; and in the year of the election another daughter, Sophia.

A year after her husband's death, Mrs Edmund Betts had married Thomas Wayth of Eye, a widower with two children. She was fifty-nine, and though it was not the fashion in the family to waste time in vain regrets, it is to be observed that George did not again allude to her in his diary as " my mother."

In 1791, Mary Anne Betts aged seven and Edmund her six-year-old brother were both sent to Mr Rogers' boarding-school at Walsham, while George, who had been there since he was five years old, was promoted to Mr Francis' school at Ditchingham. " Poor Patty," the eldest of the Wortham family, died in 1791; Betsy the next girl was too delicate for school, and was taught by a resident governess Miss Dickens.

Her father's accounts show the purchase of many books for Betsy, especially those of the poetess Mrs Barbauld, who kept a school in the neighbouring parish of Palgrave. Children's books were becoming so plentiful that the great educational authority of the time, Mrs Hannah More, gave it as her opinion that such books had a tendency " to arrest the understanding and prolong the imbecility of childhood." Could she see the books, too many and too artistically illustrated, which educationists of the present day put into the hands of our elementary school children, would she not say that learning is made too easy now?

Girls who held themselves badly, no matter from what



cause, were then subjected to such drastic remedies as steel backs and steel collars. "Riding the double horse" was another and more pleasant remedy. This was tried for delicate little Betsy, for whom her father now bought what he describes as a "man-pillion."

The Wortham household, far in advance of their times, possessed an umbrella, the mending of which cost nine shillings. Umbrellas were then not ordinary things; one would perhaps be kept at an inn or a coffee-house, and let out, to shelter customers on their way home, much as a coach or a chair would be; but few men save the "macaronis" cared to be seen with such an effeminate article in their hands.

In December 1792, there is this significant entry in George Betts' diary: "At Eye meeting of Hoxne and Hartismere Hundreds, to form a branch of the Loyal Association against levellers and republicans, and abettors of the designs of France against this country." Thomas Wayth was secretary for the Hoxne and Hartismere branch of the Association.

Soon after, the Botesdale book club received from the head-quarters of the Association, a remonstrance for including among its list of books "The Rights of Man"—a notorious production of Tom Paine, the son of a Quaker staymaker of Thetford, and who for a short time had carried on his father's business at Diss.

Ten years before, while Paine was fighting in America both with pen and sword against England, a valentine had been addressed by a local admirer to Miss Anne Betts, which shows that Paine even then bore no good reputation.

"You I love my dearest Life  
More than gracious George his wife,



More than Hardingham a flower,  
 More than Gay a midnight hour,  
 More than Chambers loves a Rout,  
 More than *Paine* a drinking Bout."

On his return from America, Tom Paine had been forced by a charge of treason to fly to France ; and from under the red flag of the Revolution, had the audacity to write to the Attorney-General who had ordered his arrest, that he and " Mr. Guelph might take warning from the example made of such people in France." Paine was called " a mad dog," and his writings were turned into ridicule ; but for all that, they were, if not dangerous, certainly mischievous.

There were riots so near to Wortham as Diss ; and in many other places grave fears were entertained for the internal peace of England ; not without reason, for the " Revolutionary Society of London " actually sent a congratulatory address to the French revolutionists in Paris.

Among the many MS. skits on the English friends of the Revolution, preserved at Wortham, is the following :—

"TO THE MASTER OF THE LONDON TAVERN

A Dinner prepare for my good friends and me,  
 The tenth of next August precisely at three.  
 Fox, Sheridan, Lambton, and Whitbread, and Grey  
 Send cards to invite—my call they'll obey.  
 Lords Lansdowne and Wycombe, and Brissott's good friend,  
 Our feast of pure virtue, well pleased, will attend.  
 Fair Bouverie <sup>1</sup> and Di <sup>2</sup> may be sure of a place,  
 Nor will Dr. Priestly, dislike to say grace.

<sup>1</sup> The Hon ——— Bouverie.

<sup>2</sup> Her sister.

Let Lange<sup>1</sup> be our cook, and delicious the meat  
 Which the sons of French freedom will greedily eat.  
 Human blood be the soup, the Remove do ye hear,  
 In sorrell well dressed, the proud heart of a peer.  
 If bishops have brains, and enough you can get,  
 Send them up before dinner, they'll serve for a whet.  
 The head of a Dutchess,<sup>2</sup> if cut off with care,  
 Baked with orange in mouth, is republican fare.  
 The tongues of Burke, Windham, and Pitt you may stew ;  
 They're already too sharp, without sauce they will do.  
 As your tradesmen are saucy, my sutler proposes  
 A good fricasee made of shopkeepers noses.  
 The blood of your clergy black puddings will make,  
 And a King split and broiled a most excellent steak.  
 Burnt bones of young princes, just after we dine,  
 Will serve for a devil to relish our wine.

*Feb. 1793.*

DUMOURIER."

England was filled with French refugees, especially East Anglia. In 1791, Prince Louis Philippe and his sister Princess Adelaide D'Orleans took refuge in Bury St. Edmunds, under the charge of Madame de Genlis, in an old house adjoining the Angel Inn.

The immense sum, raised by voluntary contributions, for the support of the many thousands driven destitute from their native country, threatened after some months to become exhausted ; and, preaching at Bressingham, George Betts made an appeal, not only for contributions, but also to the loyalty of his congregation.

"We see," said he, "a neighbouring nation who have thrown off all submission to subordination, decency and order ; their King and Queen deliberately and most in-

<sup>1</sup> A famous cook at the London Tavern.

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess of Rutland.

humanely murdered ; their Church plundered ; their nobles exiled ; and the whole Kingdom plunged into the deepest anarchy and distress. We see them, endeavouring by every method in their power, to carry the same disorder and to create the same confusion in every other nation, which they have brought upon their own. All is now at stake ; the fate of society depends upon our conduct. Our sensibility must now be roused. Our highest duty and our dearest interests call upon us, to guard with the most watchful attention, against the introduction of French principles and French barbarities."

## CHAPTER XXVII

1795-1801

THE LOYAL ASSOCIATION—HUMANE JUSTICES—BREAD AT  
FAMINE PRICES

**F**ORTUNATE were those who lived by a navigable river in the days before railways. Charges for carriage by road were excessive, and a heavy item of the country gentleman's expenditure was cartage of such necessities as wine and salt.

George Betts' diary shows how neighbours then clubbed their orders together, to minimise the charge for carriage. A pipe of wine is shared between the Wortham household and Mr Edward Frere of Roydon. A large supply of salt, the price of which the exorbitant duty had raised to seven shillings the pound, is purchased by George, to be divided later between three neighbouring houses. Commissions for friends are undertaken by him when going to London, such as "cloth for waistcoats for Merest and self." Mr Merest was the curate in charge of Wortham, and a great friend.<sup>1</sup>

It was then the practice for the customer to supply the cloth to be made up by the tailor. A "levity" in one of George Betts' pocket-books, relates how a tailor, who had long been in the habit of making free with his customers' stuff, was seized with illness, and thinking his end was

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. H. Patteson was the Rector.

near, sent for his foreman, to whom he expressed his deep repentance for his dishonesty. "Last night," he said, "I saw all the different coloured cloths, which I have clandestinely taken, pass before my eyes, my crime stares me continually in the face." The penitent however recovered and returned to his work. His foreman, seeing him again at his old dishonest tricks, reminded him of his former confession, and of how the different coloured cloths had appeared to him on his sick bed. "True," replied the tailor, "but there was not one of this colour to be seen there," and with that comfortable reflection, he cut off a large piece of his customer's cloth, and deposited it in a place which generally went by the name of "hell."

In 1795, the smallpox again visited Wortham, and three of the servants were inoculated, as well as the five youngest children, Harriet, Tom, Sophia, Sarah, and James.

This year was one of almost famine, for after the murder of the French Royal Family, England had drifted into a war with France, which curtailed supplies from abroad. Corn was indeed so scarce, that government stepped in and prohibited the use of wheat flour in starch; allowed bakers to mix an inferior grain with wheat flour; forbade export; and encouraged import, duty free, of all sorts of food. Eight shillings a week—all that farm labourers then received—was quite inadequate for the necessities of life, and the parish workhouse was full to overflowing. "Gave ten and sixpence to the poor at the Work House who had nothing to eat," wrote George Betts on one of his weekly visits there.

In the summer holidays of 1795, George took his two eldest sons George and Edmund, "to see the troops"—volunteers, who had lately enrolled themselves—"for



the internal defence of Suffolk." Holidays over, the two boys went to Dr Grimwood's school at Dedham.

September 11th was a sad day at Wortham. George Betts wrote in his diary: "About eleven o'clock this morning, Dr. and Mrs. Grimwood came, and brought word that our dear boy George was drowned yesterday afternoon in the river at Dedham." The poor boy had been drowned while bathing, and the unscientific methods for his recovery "used for upwards of an hour" were of no avail. Artificial respiration was not then known, and the usual procedure was, that those apparently drowned were "stripped and well rolled about before a good fire, and afterwards thoroughly rubbed with salt and covered therewith."

The funeral took place at Dedham; the boy's father, Mr Wayth, and Mr Merest were present. The poor mother, doubly bereaved, for she had lately lost her newly born baby, was not strong enough for the journey.

Mrs Seymour Leeke owned the advowson of Overstrand, which she had inherited from her mother Mrs Rant, and this living being now vacant, she gave it to her cousin George Betts.

While at Norwich, where he had gone "to take the oaths to qualify for Overstrand living," he visited the Castle, now a museum, but then a prison echoing to the ineffectual sighs of miserable debtors. A present "to a poor man who had been confined in Norwich Castle a twelve month for a debt of four pound seven shillings" is entered in the accounts.

That year, the local meeting of the Loyal Association had to be deferred, on account of the Eye election. The members returned were Mr Singleton and Admiral

Cornwallis, brother of Lord Cornwallis who had lately been made a marquis for his services in India. "Blue Billy," and "Billy go tight," were the playful nicknames bestowed on the Admiral in the navy; he was a friend of Nelson, and himself a most distinguished officer. "The Admiral," wrote his brother the marquis, "got very drunk at the election, and the next day insisted on my steward taking £500 towards defraying the election. . . . No youth of one and twenty was ever more pleased at coming into Parliament."

At a ball given by the newly elected members at Eye, Mrs Betts' nephew John Worth lieutenant R.N. made one of the party from Wortham. Two other sailors belonged to the neighbourhood, Captain Wilson of Redgrave, and Captain Cunningham.

On 27th October 1797, George Betts "rode to Oakley and Hoxne, and took the oaths of a Justice of the Peace before Mr Maynard." Justices had then power to transact much business in their own houses. George became an assiduous magistrate, and was a man of much usefulness to his neighbours for many years.

In June 1798, George lost his invalid daughter, "dear Betsy." A letter written by an old friend, Mr, afterwards Sir Thomas Beevor, shows how great had been her sufferings:—"I can scarce condole with you on your late loss, as knowing the melancholy state your poor little girl has so long laid in, I am certain both you and Mrs Betts must find consolation that she is released from her misery."

In July, the diary records: paid "armorial bearings certificate £1. 1. 0. New assessed taxes . . . deduct for 7 children £5. 5. 0."

An entry made about this time illustrates the working of the unpopular Test Acts. George received in his capacity as a clergyman, "one shilling from Mr. Wayth for certificate of receiving the sacrament." Mr Wayth had lately become town clerk of Eye for which this qualification was required.

In the spring of 1798, George had attended "a meeting at Stowmarket called by Lord Euston, (the Lord Lieutenant) to consider a plan proposed by government, for calling forth the power of the county in case of invasion." Orders from headquarters, a copy of which was found at Wortham, were circulated, commanding a watch to be kept for the enemy's fleet in every parish on the eastern coast. If sighted, a red flag was to be displayed on the church tower, and the bells were to be instantly pealed. Every owner of waggons and horses within sight and hearing, was ordered to drive them immediately to a specified place, for transport of troops.

This was the year of the Irish rebellion, when the French, invited to co-operate with the insurgents against England, had succeeded in landing an army in Killala Bay, in spite of the efforts of Lord Cornwallis, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Public contributions were organised, and largely subscribed in Bressingham and Roydon, both curacies of George Betts.

In London, the Lord Mayor accompanied by a numerous body of respectable merchants, bankers, and others, appeared on a temporary hustings in the Royal Exchange, to invite contributions for the service of the country.

Altogether two millions were voluntarily subscribed.

In the spring of 1799, news reached Wortham that John Worth, then serving as second lieutenant of

H.M.S. *Dædalus*, had been court-martialled for insubordination in Table Bay. The *Dædalus* was one of a squadron, then under the command of Commodore Losack, at the Cape of Good Hope. The Wortham copy of the minutes of the court-martial states, that Captain Ball of the *Dædalus* had accused Lieutenant Worth "of speaking a falsity" before the ship's company, with regard to the quantity of wine supplied to the sick and wounded. Losing his temper, John Worth replied that the Captain's conduct was unlike that of a gentleman and the captain of a man-of-war. The words were spoken on the quarter-deck, in the hearing of two French prisoners, "the first and second captains" of a prize they had captured. Five captains, Charles Boyle, Samuel Hood Linzee, William Hotham, Thomas Alexander, and William Granger, sat on the court-martial, and sentenced Lieutenant Worth to be instantly dismissed His Majesty's service.

Acting perhaps on a friendly hint, John Worth appealed to the King, and before the year was out, he was restored to the list of lieutenants.

In December, George and Mary Betts' fifteenth child was born. In memory of the boy they still mourned, his parents named him George.

Two cases which came before Justice Betts, soon after his appointment to the bench, illustrate conditions which have now passed away.

The first was that of one Sarah Boyce of Botesdale, who demanded maintenance from her parish. Parishes were obliged to maintain the families of militiamen, and her husband was serving in the Suffolk militia. Militiamen were taken by ballot. Affixed to the church



doors were the names of men liable to serve, and there would the anxious women crowd, fearing to see the fateful number against the name of their own particular man.

The other case appears thus in the diary: "Gave a poor woman two and sixpence, whom I had sent to Botesdale Bridewell till she could be removed into Northumberland with a pass." Mrs George Betts' great-great-grandfather, Thomas Deye, had granted just such a pass to a pauper in 1693. The old document, which bears his signature and that of the other sitting justice, Sir John Castleton, was found among the pages of George Betts' Magistrate's book, to be made use of probably as a precedent. Since 1693, the law had been but slightly modified; paupers were now allowed to settle in a new parish, on producing certificates from the churchwardens and overseers of their original place of settlement, but this indulgence was only for those capable of work.

On April 2nd 1800, an incident occurring in Wortham brings vividly before us the savage terrorism of the English law, which magistrates, however mercifully disposed, were still bound to administer.

One John Styles of Wortham yeoman, had sent his sheep to graze on Wortham Ling. In the evening when the shepherd, or day man as he is called in the deposition, went to look for his master's flock, he was told that two boys, William Flatman of Wortham and John Waters of Roydon, had been seen to carry away a new-born lamb and were then busy flaying it. The shepherd found the carcase of the lamb half flayed covered with flags (turf); and one of the boys accused the other of having killed it with a cudgel, and of having threatened to beat him unless



he helped to flay it. The enraged farmer brought the boys before the nearest magistrates, George Betts and John Frere of Roydon, who committed them to prison intending that they should be tried at the Ipswich Sessions at the end of the month. Neither of the boys were believed to be more than ten years old.

On the 9th April, George Betts received a letter from Lord Chedworth, the chairman of the Ipswich quarter-sessions, saying that he "apprehended that the Sessions had no power to try the offence for which the little boys are committed."

To this George Betts replied: "Mr Frere and I, when we committed the two little boys, were fully aware that the Sessions seldom if ever took cognizance of offences of that nature, but we felt ourselves disagreeably circumstanced; we most sincerely wished the farmer had taken the law into his own hands and horse-whipped both of them severely, but after they were brought before us, we thought it impossible for us not to commit them. On account of their tender age, and looking upon it rather as a boyish freak, although certainly a very bad one (in the eye of the law it is a very heinous offence) we were unwilling they should lie in gaol till August, before they were tried, if it could be avoided, and we therefore bound the prosecutor over to the Sessions, at the same time we doubted very much whether the Sessions could or would try the offence. I intended to take the liberty of calling on your Lordship the day before the Sessions, when I should have stated the case fairly to you, and advised with you how to proceed, and if the matter could not be got rid of in any other way to have continued the prosecutor's recognizance for his appearance at the assizes."

Lord Chedworth replied in a long letter, stating that he had conferred with three other magistrates, "Mr. Dillingham, Col. Stisted, and Mr. Gibson, and that they feared it was impossible for a capital offence to be tried at the Sessions. "Of your humane inclination towards the little culprits," he writes, "I am well assured, I wish it was in my power to suggest any mode by which the matter could be terminated at the Sessions."

As a concession to the wishes of Mr Betts and Mr Frere, it was eventually agreed that counsel's opinions should be taken on the matter, and two barristers were consulted. The most lenient view was that of Mr George Wood of the Inner Temple, afterwards a Baron of the Exchequer, who gave it as his opinion that the only chance for the little boys was for the indictment to be in the common form of larceny. It was possible, he argued, and he was a famous special pleader, that the lamb had been dead when the boys carried it away, and that they were therefore only guilty of stealing meat of the value of ten pence. Otherwise the offence was felony, and could not be tried at the Sessions, being punishable with death.

The fate of the two wretched children is not related, but it is probable that they lingered in gaol till the Assizes at all events.

George Betts attended these Assizes, arriving at Bury on the 1st of August 1800, when he "dined with the judges," the Lord Chief Baron Sir Archibald Macdonald and the Hon. Sir Beaumont Hotham, and the day following with the High Sheriff.

The second trial of Margaret Catchpole, for escaping from Ipswich gaol, was held at these same Assizes. Her romantic history was written at Wortham Rectory by

a later rector, the Rev. Richard Cobbold. The trial was before Cobbold's time, and the vivid picture he gives of it may very likely have been supplied in after years by his old friend George Betts. Cobbold writes of the Sheriff's pomp and state, as something approaching to regal splendour—indeed, the gaudy liveries, the gilded carriage, and all the attendant expenses made it a heavy burden on the unfortunate country gentleman appointed to the office. The despair of the wretched prisoners is contrasted with the rejoicings of the townsmen ; the bells ringing ; the scarlet-robed white-wigged judges attended by the Sheriff's javelin men ; and the Mayor and aldermen, clad in civic robes, with gilt chains and silver maces. George Betts could describe it all to him, for he was among the magistrates sitting by the side of the Sheriff and judges during the trial.

In the spring of 1800, George had attended a county meeting at Stowmarket "to address the King on the scarcity of provisions." England then stood alone against France, and in consequence the price of grain was enormous.

The Wortham farm accounts show the state of the market. In May, George sold ten coombs of wheat to the parish at £3, 4s. the coomb ; this was at a reduction on the market price, for which he was later compensated by the overseers.

But whatever the market price, farm labourers, according to custom, bought wheat from their masters at a specified rate. Thus, when it was up to nearly four pounds, George Betts supplied his men at one pound four shillings the coomb. A like arrangement applied to other provisions, as is shown by an agreement made between Mr

Betts and one William Catton, his "farming man," in March 1800.

"He is to have wages twelve shillings a week. His wheat at one pound four shillings per coomb. His pork at four shillings and six pence a stone. His house rent and firing. If any butter to spare, he is to be allowed 1 lb. a week at nine pence per pound. He is to board a boy at four shillings a week." William Catton, who seems to have been engaged as, what would now be termed a working bailiff, was killed by a fall from a waggon; a man named Eastgate took his place, and the same terms held good with him, with the addition of two guineas a year to Eastgate's wife to pay half her servant girl's wages.

The Suffolk county meeting on the subject of the dearth of bread, and other like meetings throughout England, brought about an Act of Parliament prohibiting the sale of bread until twenty-four hours after it was baked. This was followed by a Royal Proclamation of which a copy remained at Wortham. The proclamation recommended the greatest frugality in the use of all species of grain, and exhorted all heads of families to reduce the household consumption of bread by one-third of that consumed in ordinary times. One quartern loaf was to be allowed to each person for the week, and no flour was to be used in any cooking other than bread.

In February 1801, a special sessions of magistrates, which George Betts attended, was held at the "King's Head" Diss, for putting in execution "an Act for making better provision for the poor, and for diminishing the consumption of bread corn."

The contemporary newspapers found at Wortham,



are filled with recipes for making potato bread, potato jellies, puddings, and flour, which it was said would keep for years. Horses, cows, and pigs were to be put on the same diet as their masters. A satirical bard of 1800 recommends his fellow countrymen to—

“ Boil some potatoes nice and pappy ;  
Your nags will all be mighty happy,  
When first they taste such dainty food,  
So savoury, relishing and good.  
You’ll soon rejoice, and well you may  
In the vast saving of your hay.”

With the price of provisions so high, and the poison of the French Revolution still working in England ; it is no wonder that a spirit of sedition was spreading. This is shown in some letters preserved at Wortham.

A militiaman of the Northumberland regiment, on his way to see his wife’s relations in Wortham, encountered the Rev. Daniel Phillips, who incautiously asked him the price of bread in his part of the country. The soldier answered that his part of the country would soon be up ; and that, if the militia were called out, they would not fire or endeavour to suppress any tumult ; that some great people had been long enough in power, and that their heads, and many of the farmers’, would be taken off.

This conversation being reported to Lord Charles Fitzroy, the general commanding the Eastern district, a search party was instantly sent to Wortham ; the sergeant in charge bringing a letter from his superior officer, Lord Euston the general’s brother, asking Mr Betts for information and help in securing the rebel. The man could not be identified, and so escaped. This was on the 1st July, 1801.



On the 30th July 1801, George Betts paid four guineas for a coomb of wheat.

Surely the widespread trouble and distress revealed by the diary of this simple country gentleman should be a grave warning to us. When, at the end of the eighteenth century, the war with France broke out, Britannia did rule the waves; we were stronger at sea than all the nations of the world put together; the population was not more than one-fifth of what it is now, we grew actually more wheat then than now, and less than one-sixth of the corn and flour now required had to be imported; yet war risks sent freights up, with such effect on prices, and such resulting distress as we have seen.

At the present time, the sea power of one great European nation is nearly equal to our own. In the event of our having to defend ourselves against an enemy or a combination of enemies of nearly equal, equal, or superior force to our own, to what figure might not freights be driven up, and to what the price of the staff of life—bread?

Moreover, in the time of George Betts, very little raw material was imported from abroad, to be manufactured in this country. Now such manufactures are among our greatest industries, and they afford the sole means of support to millions. Under war conditions, with war perhaps at our doors, freight of raw material would probably reach a prohibitive point; which would mean the shutting down of mills, and a total loss of wages to the operatives.

With bread at famine prices, and our great hives of industry with no work to do, what would be the attitude of the masses—the great majority—of the people of England? Would not submission be forced upon our government

(of whatever party it might be)—submission to terms of peace disastrous certainly to our future prosperity, probably to our imperial rule, even possibly to our very independence as a nation. Can any self-denial be too hard, any sacrifice too great, if by adequate preparation, we can safeguard ourselves against so awful a catastrophe?

## CHAPTER XXVIII

1801-1805

THE HARTISMERE VOLUNTEERS—"MR DEVIL" AT THE  
TURNPIKE—NEWS OF TRAFALGAR

**I**N 1801, a notable change in agriculture took place, the introduction of machinery. That year, "a chaff cutting engine" made by one Burrell of Thetford, was purchased for use on the Wortham home farm.

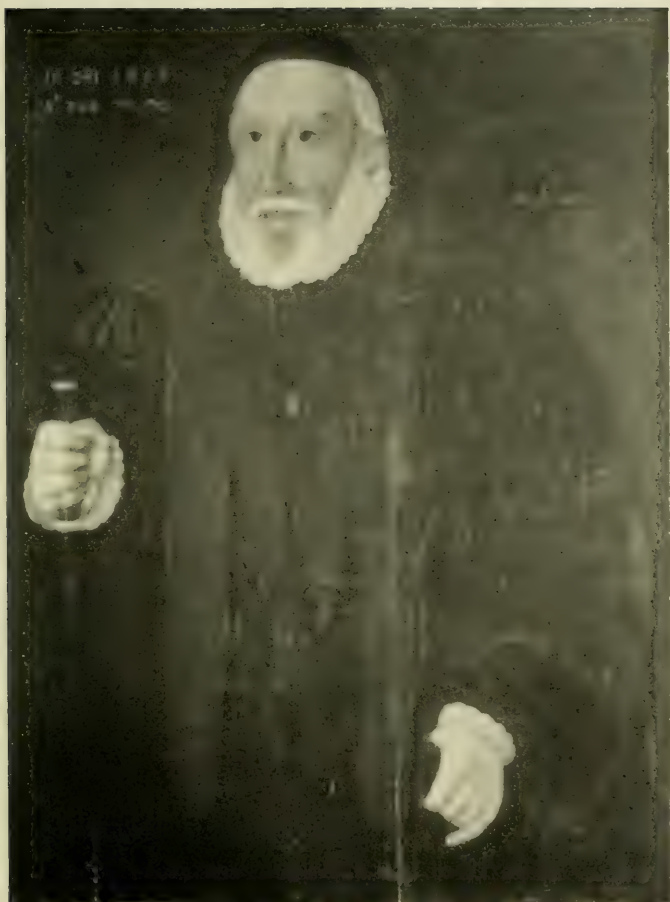
Edmund, now the eldest surviving son of George and Mary Betts, left Dedham school in that year for a private tutor, a certain Mr Cobbold of Coddendam. He was nearly eighteen; and his father's frequent presents of stocks, coats, hats, breeches, etc., suggest the curled, scented, tight-waisted exquisite of that day, the immediate successor of the absurd macaroni. Edmund had been somewhat wild and extravagant, and left debts at Dedham which his father paid. Mr Hasell in a letter to George Betts of this year's date, says, "I rejoice that Edmund has seen the errors of youth, and is in a way to administer comfort and not pain to two kind parents."

The comfort came in a good hour, for the year was one of sorrow. On February the 3rd, George Betts enters in his diary, "my little boy George died at Oakley a little before twelve at night." Mrs Wayth had been ill for some time, and it would seem that Mary Betts had gone to

“ the White House ” at Oakley to nurse her mother, and had taken with her the three-year-old George.

This affliction was soon after followed by the death of Mrs Wayth ; she was buried in Oakley Church beside her first husband Edmund Betts. By her will, she left her Hoxne estate, inherited from her brother Thomas D’Eye, to her grandson John Worth ; her Scole estate and £500 to her husband Thomas Wayth, £200 to Anne Betts ; and all the residue of her real and personal estate to her daughter Mary, wife of George Betts ; John Worth her grandson, to take plate, furniture, linen, and china, to the value of one hundred pounds. By three codicils she disposed of the furniture of the “ best parlour ” and the “ keeping parlour.” Her diamond bracelets and other trinkets went to Mary Betts, together with “ the pictures of her father and Mrs Worth,” and several articles of plate, among which were two silver boxes 2 inches in height and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. These little cylindrical boxes dated 1677 were, in 1906, sold at Christie’s for £300. They had originally belonged to Martha Cropley, wife of that William Cullum whose curious wager has already been recounted, and for sole ornament were engraved with the arms of her family. Eighty-four years later, Miss Kate Betts, Martha Cropley’s direct descendant, wrote to Mr Manning, rector of Diss, a well-known antiquary, inquiring about the arms on these boxes. Mr Manning in his answer said : “ I find that the arms are those of the family of Cropley of Shelland, Suffolk, now represented by the Harbords, Lords Suffield.” This letter was found inside one of the silver boxes when they were on view at Christie’s.

A portrait of William Cullum’s great grandfather now



A WORTHAM PORTRAIT  
"NON SINE QUARE"





came into possession of the Betts family. The Cullum estate of "Shorts" in Thorndon had been then lately sold, and the old books and furniture dispersed or destroyed; but Martha Betts loved the old things, and out of one of the condemned books she rescued a couple of ancient soldered headed pins, and inserted them in a piece of paper, writing on it the following explanation:—

"These pins were taken out of a Book that came from 'Shorts' in Thorndon Nov<sup>ber</sup> 23<sup>d</sup> 1787; they were then a hundred and 50 years old, and the Book belonged to the Cullum who<sup>s</sup> picture I have in our Great Parlour. The Book is burnt. he was my Great Grand Grand Father's Father."

After his mother-in-law's death, George Betts took his family to Overstrand, of which he was now rector, and there subscribed "two guineas to the life boat." This was twenty-four years before the founding of the Royal Life Boat Institution.

In the summer of 1801 George Betts, who had taken his degree as LL.B., was installed a Prebendary of Lichfield, through the good offices of James Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, nephew of the late Archbishop and brother of Lord Cornwallis of Brome.

On his return from Lichfield, George hurried to Norwich to the deathbed of Mrs Mary Betts, his last surviving aunt. She died in her 81st year, and appears to have been hale and hearty up to within a few weeks of her death. In George's diary we read of her making a long visit to Wortham, and with her nephew, nieces, and all the children spending a day on Scole Common to see the Hartismere volunteers, and coming back in the evening to a late dinner; this during the last year of her life.

Then, her nieces, Mary and Anne Betts, and later, George, went to stay with her at Norwich, where she took them to the play and to the gardens to see a cock-fight ! Aunt Mary did many commissions for her nephew's family. To her, George's wife sent her wedding ring, grown tight after twenty-four years service, to be enlarged by a Norwich jeweller ; and it was she who chose the cloth for little Tom's clothes, when he went to school with Mr Careless at Felsted. Her house was always open to the Wortham family, and there her nephew stayed, whenever business with his friend and solicitor, Mr, afterwards Sir William, Foster called him to Norwich. Aunt Mary was a link with the past who could ill be spared.

This year, Mrs Betts took her second daughter Harriet to Miss Wingfield's school at Dereham ; and she " carried " her two youngest girls " to Miss Routhe's school at Brooke."

Before the shooting season of 1801, George Betts procured game certificates for Admiral Wilson and himself, from Mr Hasell in Ipswich, who wrote with them in friendly wise : " Enclosed are the game certificates, and I wish you and your neighbours good diversion in the field, and a capacious shoulder of mutton after it."

A wager, made at Redgrave, is thus recorded in the diary : " 3rd. August 1802 Admiral Wilson laid Mr. Moore two guineas, that if he met twelve people at Sir H. Parker's<sup>1</sup> on Wednesday the 4th, two of them would never have seen a melon cut cross wise. If he met six and under twelve, he betted one guinea that not one of them had seen it." Whether or no Mr Moore won his wager, during his visit to Melford Hall, is not stated.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Harry Parker was High Sheriff of Suffolk for that year and the next.

That year, Captain John Worth married Miss Catherine Sinclair, and brought his bride home to Oakley.

The short-lived peace of Amiens, of which "every body was glad and nobody proud," came to an end in May 1803. The event had been expected, and the price of wheat had risen accordingly. The Wortham copy of the *London Evening Post* for the 3rd of the preceding August, states that the "Lord Mayor then ordered the price of bread to be raised half an assize, thus the quartern loaf was to be sold at tenpence halfpenny."

In the face of renewed war, the supplementary militia was again embodied, Ned one of the Betts postillions, being drawn for Wortham.

George's diary for August of that year records that he "went with Admiral Wilson to consult with Lord Cornwallis at Culford," with the result, that a meeting was called at Eye for the Hundred of Hartismere. At the meeting a subscription was made for the defence of the country. Admiral Wilson was elected inspector ; and Mr Betts, who subscribed twenty-one guineas, was treasurer. Besides this, the thirty-one parishes of the Hundred raised a fund of £838, 3s. for the clothing of volunteers, to which the Betts family gave twenty-six guineas. Once again East Anglians lived in dread of the hourly expected invasion.

Bonaparte had already seized Hanover, and in arrogant anticipation of his conquest of Britain, prepared a medal engraved, "Descent upon England, struck at London in 1804." In answer to which boast the following epigram was published in the *Bury Gazette* and copied by George Betts :—

“ Says Boney to Johnny, I’ll soon be at Dover ;  
 Says Johnny to Boney, that’s doubted by some ;  
 Says Boney, but what if I really come over ?  
 Says Johnny, then really you’ll be overcome.”

Lieutenant William Frere, with the help of his neighbours, raised two companies of light infantry known as the Hartismere rangers, drawn from volunteers in the county between Bacton and Wortham. All classes were arming themselves, irrespective of age or calling. The Rev. George Betts for the defence of his family laid in a stock of “ cartridges for my blunderbuss,” and purchased besides a double-barrelled gun for the sum of six guineas. Before the end of the year, Edmund Betts the eldest son entered the East Suffolk militia. His father took him to Ipswich where the regiment was stationed, to furnish his rooms. Among his ensign’s equipment, “ a sword, gorget, and sash ” were bought for thirteen pounds.

The war scare continued ; and early in January 1804, special constables for every parish in Hartismere were sworn in at Wortham Manor, “ by John Frere, Thomas Jenkinson Woodward Esqrs. and John Dove, and George Betts clerks.” They were to act “ in case of the enemies of this country putting to sea, for the purpose of invading it, or of actual invasion.”

It was at this time that the first Act of Parliament was passed for the making of railways, so-called ; in reality, merely tram-limes of wood cased with iron, for use in manufacturing districts. The first steam carriage had been invented the year before by Richard Trevithick, and had lately been exhibited in London, on (very appropriately) the site of the now great railway terminus of Euston. It is said that the engine under the charge



of the inventor, on its way to the port where it was to be shipped for London, came to a closed toll gate, which flew open like lightning. "What have we to pay?" shouted Trevithick to the gatekeeper. The trembling man, his teeth chattering in his head, cried in a shaking voice: "Nothing to pay my dear Mr. Devil, nothing to pay, drive on as fast as you can."

In July 1804, George Betts bought the manor of Wortham Hall, and became lord of lands as freehold, which his ancestors had held as copyhold for nearly four hundred years.

In December, Dr Lubbock was summoned from Norwich to see little twelve-year-old Sarah; but his skill was of no avail, for on the 4th her father writes: "Dear Sarah died this morning at seven o'clock."

The sad Christmas past, the prospect of the first wedding in the family brought renewed brightness to Wortham; and Edmund, now a young captain of twenty-one, introduced his future bride, Miss Maria Druery of Erpingham. To enable his son to marry, George Betts settled on him the manors of Overstrand and Cromer Gunners, the advowson of the church, and Overstrand Hall and the farm belonging to it. On her side, the bride brought into settlement a house and small property in Erpingham close to Norwich, left to her by her father, Thomas Druery.

The wedding took place on the 28th of February, when George writes: "I married Edmund and Miss Druery this morning at Erpingham and returned to Mr. Foster's." The Betts family were staying with the Fosters at Norwich for the wedding, Mrs Molly being given a new hat for the occasion, which cost her husband the then enormous price of one pound thirteen shillings.

At the end of October, came the news of Trafalgar ; and in honour of Nelson, England's dead hero, all church-bells were tolled for six hours. " No work was done, and it was very still, and you could hear all the bells going." A medal of Nelson was this year George Betts' Christmas gift to his friend Mr Merest.

In Norwich, the Mayor's refusal to allow a bonfire in the market-place on Thanksgiving night, awoke a storm of indignation. Dr Lubbock sent to Wortham some printed lines on the subject :—

" Why has Norwich of joy than most places shewn less ?  
Does she slightly think of great Nelson victorious ?  
Are her citizens traitors, and rebels inglorious ?  
Do the wretches then pray that their country be cursed,  
With the all-blighting presence of Nappy the first ? "

Then, in allusion to the former rejoicing in Norwich at the fall of the Bastille, the writer continues :—

" For Frenchmen are not now as twelve years before,  
Marseillais's out of fashion, Cà ira's a bore."

## CHAPTER XXIX

1806-1813

COKE OF NORFOLK, AND HIS "WHIGGISH SHEEP"—  
OBSOLETE COTTAGE INDUSTRIES—A CONVICT DE-  
SCRIBES SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

**G**EORGE BETTS' diary for 1806 shows him again much interested in a contested election, this time for the county of Norfolk. The Tory candidate the Hon. John Wodehouse, was opposed by two well-known Whigs, Mr Coke of Holkham, and the Right Hon. William Windham. George, as ever, was on the Tory side, and in August "canvassed Brissingham for Col. Wodehouse, and was promised thirteen votes." A few weeks later, he "paid eighteen pence to Mr. Mullinger of Burgate, who had promised me his vote for Wodehouse, and had paid one and three pence for letters."

"Coke of Norfolk," a great agriculturist as well as an ardent Whig, was famed for his "progressive beef," and for the Southdown sheep which he introduced into East Anglia. The Tories, remaining faithful to the old breed, railed against "Coke's whiggish sheep, which they said had completely spoilt the taste of Norfolk mutton." "Old Norfolks will do well enough," they declared, "spite of their braggery and puff." To back his political opinions, Mr Betts bought a score of sheep of that breed for his home farm.

George did not, like many of his neighbours, manufacture his own wool into cloth, but let his "whiting office" used for whitening yarn, for the sum of fifteen pounds a year. The various hand industries connected with wool then gave constant employment to the Wortham cottagers. In her school-girl days, Mary Betts had written out a list of wool trades carried on by the poor in their own homes, the very names of which are now forgotten :— "Staplers, dyers, pickers, scourers, scribblers, carders, combers, spinners, spoolers, warpers, queelers, weavers, fullers, tuckers, burlers, shearmen, pressers, clothiers and packers. One after another, tumble, toss, twist, bake, and boil the raw material, until they have each extracted a livelihood from it."

In an industry so widespread, fraud in some shape or another was sure to occur; and it is not surprising that numerous cases of "false reeling" are entered in George Betts' magistrate's book. In 1804, a certain Mary Flatt of Wortham, "a putter out of yarn," was found in possession of a pound of worsted yarn, "reeled contrary to the statute made and provided."

In this book, for the same year, there is a case of smuggling, Samuel Linstead of Hoxne being found in possession of foreign geneva and shag tobacco without being able to produce a warrant for their delivery. But the neighbourhood of Wortham was really too far inland for smuggling, and this is the one and only case which was recorded by George Betts.

On the 13th of November 1806, George made this entry in his diary: "Edmund died about 2 o'clock this afternoon." It seems to have been very sudden, as his father mentions no previous illness. He had only

married the year before, and was not quite twenty-three.

The young soldier died at home, and three days after, while his body still lay unburied, duty, as he understood it, called his father to Norwich. It was the third day of the Norfolk election, and “ the weather,” as George’s poll book relates, “ proved remarkably fine. The Castle Hill and all its avenues, the Market place, and the principal streets of Norwich, were thronged with the cavalcades of voters (preceded by banners and bands of music) decorated with the colours of the respective candidates.” Along the crowded streets, threading his way through the excited, uproarious freeholders, who had thronged into Norwich in every sort of conveyance from many miles round, drove the sad-faced elderly clergyman, to record his vote for Wodehouse ; and duty accomplished, he turned without resting and drove home to lay the head of his eldest son in his grave in Wortham Church.

Maria Betts the young widow, stayed at Wortham for a few weeks after her husband’s death. She married again three years later, another soldier Lieutenant Longe of the 7th Light Dragoons.

In the summer of 1807, Anne Betts’ health broke down, and she went away for change of air ; George thus playfully records it in his diary : “ I signed a furlough for Nanny from the 6th of August till the 17th of September, after which she is to be reputed a deserter and treated accordingly if she does not return.” His sister, entering into the joke, wrote beneath—

“ I agree to this witness my hand

“ A. BETTS.”



The improvement wrought by the change was only temporary; in the spring following the diary tells of Dr Lubbock coming from Norwich to prescribe for the invalid.

George was at this time attending daily meetings at Diss to assess the property tax, being one of the commissioners. The following return made by a farmer at Bressingham was preserved by him as a curiosity:—

“ I, J. E. can say  
 I’ve no income to pay,  
 Because I have got little pelf,  
 For should I appeal  
 The truth to reveal,  
 I’ve nothing to maintain myself.  
 Gentlemen, with submission  
 Who sit on commission,  
 If I come to the place that you choose,  
 As my Family is large,  
 It will bring such great charge  
 You must pay for the time that I lose.”

As soon as Anne Betts was well enough to be moved, the doctor sent her to Aldborough, a little seaside town then lately made famous by Crabbe’s poems, within a long day’s drive of Wortham. While she was there, her brother rode over to see her, and was so charmed with the primitive little place, that he took lodgings for the summer holidays, the whole family migrating there in July. They drove over in the family coach, and the whisky a new purchase, dining at the Tuns at Yoxford on the way, and reaching Aldborough in the evening; the turnpike charges came to three shillings. George’s son Tom and his friend Mr Thomas joined them in Aldborough,

coming from Woolpit, where both the young men were under the tutorship of Mr Cobbold.

Five weeks passed happily away, in driving, riding, and boating on the river Alde, and the time came to return ; the young people driving in the coach, the father and mother in the open whisky. On August the 8th, George writes : " We left Aldborough soon after nine ; soon after ten, there was a most violent tempest, and Molly and I were completely wet. We stopped at the Tuns Yoxford, where we dried our clothes, from thence to Mr. Leggatts at Sibton where we were hospitably received. At Sibton three horses were killed by lightning : We stopped at Fressingfield, and from thence got home to a late dinner."

Mr Leggatt was the Vicar of Sibton, for whom George Betts during his stay at Aldborough had several times taken the duty.

George writes in his diary for May 1809 : " Gave Molly five guineas when she went to see the fashions at Diss." Those were the days before fashion papers caricatured the human form ; dolls, known as Flanders babies, were used to display new styles in dress.

" Empire " fashions, brought in by the Empress Josephine, reigned supreme over the world feminine ; but in the world masculine, a new garment was causing almost more heartburning and distress of mind than the great Peninsular War, to which it owed its origin. Trousers were introduced by the Duke of Wellington, as being easier to supply to his men than breeches. In England, the general detestation of trousers threatened even the Iron Duke's popularity. The militia at Bath refused to march, on account of deductions made from their pay to supply these hated garments.

Tom Betts, now an undergraduate at Cambridge, read a notice on the screens that "students appearing in hall or chapel in pantaloons or trousers should be considered absent." At Oxford, the Hebrew lecturer was severely censured by the Principal of Brasenose, for daring to appear so attired "before young gentlemen in statu pupillari." Even the great Duke himself was turned back at Almack's some years later by an official, who informed his grace that he could not be allowed to enter while wearing trousers.

In his diary for the 21st of May 1810, George Betts records the following wager:—"Present Mr. Beevor, Admiral Wilson, Mr. Sheriffe and Mr. Betts. If Portugal is in the possession of the French on this day twelvemonth the Admiral gives a dinner; if not, Mr. Sheriffe gives a dinner. Therefore only a peace can prevent our having a dinner."

The year had begun darkly for England; and the landing of the wreck of Moore's army after the disastrous victory of Corunna, and the news of the defeats in Spain, had filled the hearts of those like-minded with Mr Sheriffe with despair. However, the stout-hearted Admiral's faith was justified. In July the victory of Talavera restored British prestige; and by the time the four gentlemen sat down to the dinner of Mr Sheriffe's providing, Massena, with what remained of his army of eighty thousand men, had fallen back on Salamanca, and relinquished all attempts to drive Wellington out of Portugal.

Sir Thomas Beevor, the father of one of the gentlemen concerned in this wager, received a letter soon after, of which he gave his friend Mr Betts a copy. On the copy George wrote the following note explanatory of the cir-

cumstances under which the letter was written : “ Old X was a tenant to Sir Thomas Beevor at Wrenningham. He gave up farming, and took to the profession of horse-stealing, in which he carefully educated all his sons. For a very long time, this trade was conducted with great success by an exchange between Yorkshire and other northern Counties and the southern parts of the kingdom. The sons were first laid hold of in succession, the old man fighting shy, and all sentenced to be hanged, but reprieved on condition of transportation. The old man at last was also caught in the trap, and took his trial on two indictments, one for burglary to a very serious amount, the other for horse-stealing. He was condemned, but reprieved, and remained in Newgate or on board the Hulks, till the ship was ready to convey this virtuous character to the delightful abode described in his letter.” The letter is dated Sydney, New South Wales, 25 November 1811. Names are suppressed for obvious reasons :—

“ SIR,

I think it a duty incumbent on me knowing you to be a gentleman that wishes to hear of my welfare, I have been at my destination about two months I therefore beg leave to give you a little account of the nature of this country ; at my arrival I had a happy scene, that was my five sons were all alongside the ship before I had been an hour in the cove and made a most respectable appearance, which gave me more happiness than tongue can express, and more so when I came on shore to find such a delightful town and places of amusement of every description, and what more astonished me was to see one of the first race courses that ever I beheld, and horses of a



very superior quality. My sons are all well situated, viz, one in business for himself, a carpenter and employs several hands, another a cooper, and one clerk to the commissary, one groom to the Governor and another training groom to one of the first gentlemen in this Colony and on my coming on shore I was appointed by his Excellency the Governor to be principal superintendant of the King's Stores, in which situation I am very comfortable and give great satisfaction.

“ In this country there are the finest crops of corn of every description that I ever saw, and plentifully supplied with merchandize from the East Indies as well as from America and Europe. This harbour is always crowded with shipping and the handsomest harbour I ever saw. The town is situated on a level and the streets much after the streets in London. The merchants' houses are very large and their trade very extensive, they have all been prisoners but are immensely rich.

“ The man whom I succeeded is now made a magistrate and General Inspector of the King's works.

“ The agricultural parts of the country are situated about forty miles from the Capital but they are very extensive and bring forth wonderful produce. A man of the name of —— who was convicted from Norwich about twenty years since, is now one of the greatest merchants in the world. He has a fleet of twenty-five sail of merchant-men which trade to all parts of the world.

“ The natives of this country are of colour black, but very lusty and straight in figure, go quite naked, the clime being very healthy and pleasant and many of the natives speak good English.



“ Chief of their support is fish which is very plentiful, they have no houses, the Bush is their delight.

“ They frequently fight very severe battles. Their war arms are spears about twenty feet long which they throw very fatal.

“ Sir Thomas I hope this will meet you well as it leaves me and my sons. I will be very thankful if you will please to inform all my friends of my welfare, and at the same time most humbly beg that you will be pleased to write to me to give me an account of my native land.

“ I could say a great deal more, but the ship is about sailing and the captain is closing his packet.

“ So I conclude your most obedient  
and very dutiful servant X.

“ SIR THOMAS BEEVOR Bart  
Hethel Norfolk.”

In the diary for 1810, occurs the first mention of a family before long to be connected with the Betts of Wortham. “ Tom at Mr Doughty’s,” writes his father, on September 3rd.

The Doughtys were near neighbours. The Rev. George Clarke Doughty vicar of Hoxne, had come there some fifteen years before, during the life of his father George Doughty of Theberton Hall, and there continued to live after his father’s death. He held as well as Hoxne, the family living of Martlesham near Woodbridge. At this time, Mr Doughty was a widower, his wife, a member of the old family of Rivett of Brockford already mentioned in these pages, having died six years before.

Early next year, a collection was made in Bressingham for the relief of English prisoners confined in France. A

great many of these poor people had been detained there since the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, when Napoleon seized on all the English tourists who had taken advantage of the peace to flock over to the Continent.

The long wars and the consequent shortage of men was responsible for a great rise in servants' wages. The Wortham postillion at this time received £26 a year, a footman £30, the gardener £25. When George Betts first began housekeeping in 1775, his postillions had been well content with six guineas a year and their livery, and in 1790 the gardener had received only £16 a year. Maid-servants' wages had also risen, but not to such an extent as the men's; the cook at Wortham now received £10 a year, as against £5 in 1780.

In 1813, the farm labourers' weekly wage was ten shillings in summer, and nine in winter. That year, the control of Justices over farm wages, which had long been a dead letter, was formally abolished. The price of wheat and the rate of wages both fluctuated greatly during the next few years. In the summer of 1817, wheat was sold for fifty shillings the coomb, and wages rose to thirteen shillings and sixpence, dropping to twelve shillings in November.

In 1810, a new form of entertainment was thought worthy of special mention in the diary. "Mr. Lee, Mrs. Ayton, Miss E. Lee, and Miss Ibbetson came and *tea-ed* here," wrote George Betts; the italics are his. No longer was it the fashion to eat one's dinner at two; five was the accepted hour, and friends arrived to drink tea between that meal and supper. Tea, become fashionable, was so freely adulterated, that an Act of Parliament especially provided against "great quantities of sloe leaves and leaves of ash, elder, and other trees being manufactured

and sold in imitation of tea, to the injury and destruction of great quantities of timber, woods, and underwood, the prejudice of the health of his Majesty's subjects, the diminution of the revenue, the ruin of the fair trader ; and the encouragement of idleness."

The Lees of Dickleburgh were intimate friends of the Betts family ; and when, in 1812, James went to Oxford, he entered Trinity, where Dr Lee was President. That year, Thomas Betts was ordained deacon at Norwich ; and another domestic event to be chronicled was the birth of John Worth's only child, christened Mary in honour of Mrs Betts, her godmother and great-aunt.

On the murder of Mr Perceval the unfortunate Prime Minister killed this year by a maniac, a county meeting was called. "At Stowmarket," wrote George, "to address the Regent on the assassination of Mr Perceval."

Another local event which took place soon after, was the funeral of the widow of the second Duke of Chandos. George writes : on the 8th of April 1813 "I attended the Duchess of Chandos' funeral from Major House to Worlingworth."

Early in June, George went to London, to help his friend Admiral Wilson, who had some important business to transact. He stayed with Mr and Mrs Fisher, relations of Mr Merest and old friends of George Betts ; and from their house, he wrote the following letter to his wife :—

"CLOYSTERS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY,  
*Thursday, 10th June*

"MY DEAR MARY,

Before I set out on my travels this morning I will begin a letter to you to inform you what

has passed since we parted, and before the post goes out in the evening, and what more I can of the occurrences of the day.

“ After I reached Norwich on Tuesday evening, Tom and I went to the Coach Office and luckily I was able to take a place in the coach which carries four and leaves Ipswich at eight o'clock.

“ I called upon Jackson who was not at home. I called upon Mr. Bacon and left Merest's letter, and then called on Hasell who is quite well and sat chatting with him a quarter of an hour and then went to the Golden Lyon where I slept. At eight precisely the coach came to the door in which I found Dr. Kilderbee and Mr. Wenn an attorney, and we took another gentleman up at Washbrooke Swan. We had a very pleasant party and arrived in Bishopsgate Street  $1/4$  before seven.

“ I proceeded directly to the Cloysters where I met with the friendly hospitable reception I ever have done.

“ I found Fisher very weak and his medical attendant tells me he must keep himself quiet and he makes no doubt in a few days he will be well.

“ He desires you would tell Merest he is to write to him when he wishes to have a dish of fish. His spirits are very good and I sat chatting with him till eleven o'clock. He has slept well. I have breakfasted and am now going to set out in search of adventures. Tom will write to his aunt Nanny and confirm my account of her ticket being drawn a blank. It is ten o'clock so I must have done for the present.

“  $1/4$  past three. I have seen Mrs. Wilson who wrote to Mary Anne last Saturday, the Admiral left it somewhere to be frank'd, the Admiral's friend I suppose forgot it and



if Mary Anne has not received it, it is lost. She desires her love to you all and intends to leave London on Monday, Miss Byer comes with her. The Admiral and I called on Lord Cornwallis from whom I procured this frank. I am sorry to say the Bishop of Lichfield is in Staffordshire. I am this instant going with Wilson, Raven etc. to the Committee. I am to dine with Pollard at six after which the Admiral and I go to see Aladdin.

"I can add no more. Write as soon as you can after you receive this. Love to one and all not forgetting friends at Parsonage.

"I am in great haste  
Most affectionately yours,  
GEO : BETTS."

The diary for June 10th refers to the committee thus : "Walked with Wilson to Lord Cornwallis' and Lord Henniker's, at noon attended the committee of the Lords on Wilson's business."

The letter has two covers, the inner directed by George Betts, but the outer being written by Lord Cornwallis, with his name as frank at the left hand lower corner and dated in full "London, June ten 1813." This was in compliance with the Act of 1784 which decreed that the peer or member of Parliament should not only sign his name, which had previously been sufficient, but also write the whole address and date in full.

This Lord Cornwallis was the son of the first and celebrated Marquis, who had lately died in India soon after his second appointment as Governor-General.

On June 28th, "Tom returned from Norwich, having been ordained a priest yesterday." On the day of his



ordination he accepted the curacy of Bucklesham from the rector Mr Walford, to which early next year he added that of Newbourne, the rector being Joshua Rowley. Both parishes were near Ipswich, where Thomas Betts now took up his abode.

Among this year's expenses (1813), six shillings and sixpence was spent for "a box of phosphoric matches." It is not stated how many matches the box contained ; but sixteen years after, in 1830, a box of fifty cost half a crown ; it was four years later again before matches took the place of tinder boxes for general use.

## CHAPTER XXX

1813-1815

THE BETTS FAMILY IN LONDON—REJOICINGS AT THE  
PEACE—THE FIRST NATIONAL SCHOOLS

**S**EPT. 6th, 1813, "James and I dined at the Botesdale Book Club for the last time; it had existed since 1748." Its mission accomplished, the old club passed to the land of the Have Beens, together with the boisterous conviviality of a bygone generation. Lines in Mary Anne Betts' MS. book fitly sings its dirge :—

"Now all you who fond of reading  
Tales of wonder, tales of woe,  
And your precious time unheeding,  
To the Botesdale Book Club go.  
Once a month confined to drinking  
Mister Cobbold's wine and beer,  
Which to sober people's thinking  
With your health may interfere."

On the 6th of January 1814, deep snow prevented the Wortham party from attending the Diss Ball; this was the beginning of the famous frost, during which a sheep was roasted whole on the icebound Thames.

The "Society of Universal Good Will," which had been founded about 1784, numbered George Betts among its

sympathisers ; and his diary of 1814 tells of a sermon preached, and subscriptions collected by him, on behalf of the " distressed Germans at the seat of War."

On the 25th of April of this year, Mr and Mrs Betts with their two youngest children, James and Sophia, posted to London in their own coach. The long journey, along roads covered with " ruts deep enough to fracture the leg of a horse," over which the postilions had to manœuvre from side to side, must have been trying to Mrs Betts, whose increasing bad health had made the best London advice necessary. Her husband, to make the journey as easy as possible, arranged to sleep at Witham, where their eldest son James met them ; the whole party arriving by three o'clock of the following day at 32 Norfolk Street. Two days later, we read " Mr Powell cupped Mrs Betts, before Mr Ware couched her eye." The invalid's recovery was slow, and they had to remain in London till the end of June ; but the lodgings were changed to 31 Surrey Street, the chairmen's charge for conveying Mrs Betts to her new rooms being seven shillings.

James had gone to Oxford, and Sophia and her father were left to do the sights together. Several friends happened also to be in London, with whom they constantly dined and went to the play. Mr Postle, a nephew of Jehoshaphat Postle, George Betts' late uncle, and his family from Colney Hall, were staying at the " King's Arms Hotel," Palace Yard, Sir Thomas Heselrigge of Hoxne, and the Pattesons, were also in town ; with these last they went to see Kean in " Iago." George Betts' engagements are all chronicled in his diary. We find him dining with his old friend the Bishop of Lichfield, and going with James Patteson " from Trinity House to

Deptford, and dining with the Elder Brethren at the London Tavern." Another day he went to Woolwich, where Commissioner, afterwards Admiral, Sir Charles Cunningham<sup>1</sup> (the Captain Cunningham already mentioned) showed them the Arsenal and Nelson Dockyard; and another day to Kew to see the gardens and palace.

Shopping was not forgotten, three hats for his three girls were bought at Mrs Edwards' for four pounds sixteen shillings; a cap for their mother cost two guineas, and spectacles for her poor eyes one pound fourteen shillings. Friends were remembered, and three turbot were despatched to Aunt Nanny and the Merests at Wortham, and six shillings was spent on "Pears' transparent soap" for Mr Postle.

On the tenth and eleventh of June, George writes of the illuminations in honour of Royal guests; and, on the 18th, he paid a guinea for places for his wife, now nearly recovered, and himself, to see "the procession of the Prince Regent, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, etc., to the City dinner." This royal visit to England was in celebration of a great event, no less than the overthrow of Bonaparte by the Allies, and his banishment to the island of Elba. On the 20th, Sophia and her father attended a great review of troops, and heard the proclamation of Peace. "Seats," runs the diary, "for Sophy and self in Fleet Street to see Peace proclaimed, ten shillings."

July the 7th, after their return home, was Thanksgiving Day, and there was a dinner and a ball at Diss. Every

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Cunningham later became connected with the Betts by the marriage of his daughter Beatrice with Frederick Goodwin Doughty.

parish throughout England had "a festival" in honour of the peace. "We gave," writes George, "on the 27th, the poor inhabitants of Wortham a dinner by subscription on Wortham Green, where we dined about six hundred." He also subscribed generously to the Bressingham and Eye celebrations.

In August, Mrs Betts malady took a turn for the worse ; and we find the following sad entries in her husband's diary.

"August 5th, Mr Rigby came from Norwich to see my dear wife.

„ 6th, who died this morning soon after two o'clock. Mr and Mrs Merest with us.

„ 7th, We sent to Dereham for Harriet, who returned this evening.

„ 13th, My dear wife was buried in the South aisle of Wortham Church between ten and eleven o'clock."

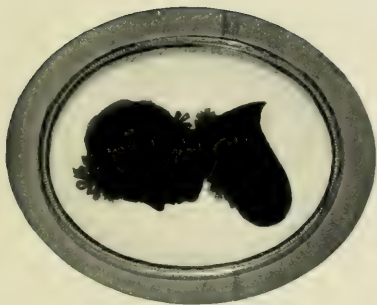
Their married life had lasted nearly forty-nine years.

On receiving the sad news, Mr Postle wrote to Mr Merest asking him to convey his condolences to the widower. "Thank God you are so near our widow'd friend, as you will be a comfort to him. I know how bereft he must feel himself ; and on no one could such a stroke fall more heavily, for no one was ever more strongly, more devotedly attached to each other than he and his dear late wife. He has one consolation, and it is a great one—the recollection that the main study of his life was to make her comfortable and happy. He has another consolation and a greater, the certainty that for a life, not of negative goodness, but of uniform active and most warm benevolence, she has gone to receive her reward."





THE REV. GEORGE BETTS  
OF WORTHAM  
1752-1822



AND MARY HIS WIFE  
1755-1814



In November, George attended "a meeting at Diss, to consider of enclosing Wortham Commons when it was proposed to rate them." The diary does not say what passed at this meeting; it is probable that the lords of the manors of Wortham Hall and Wortham Everard, *i.e.* Mr Betts and Admiral Wilson, agreed to pay the rates for the Ling and Long Green, and thus saved them from enclosure, for they remain to the parish to this day. The commons of Diss and other surrounding parishes were enclosed at that time. Enclosures had occasioned many disputes ever since mediæval days; "first," says Mr Garnier in his *Annals of the British Peasantry*, "it was a war question, then a wool question, next, a timber question, a little later a corn one, and now-a-days a moral one."

On Sunday, June 18th 1815, the day of the battle of Waterloo, George Betts was taken very ill while conducting service in Bressingham Church; nothing was written in the diary for many weeks, and much we miss all accounts of that eventful time. As soon as he could be moved, the family went to Aldborough, and on August 22nd he had sufficiently recovered to be able to ride over to see the ruins of Leiston Abbey, where he gave a shilling largesse to the harvest men.

This old custom still survives; largesse was asked of the writer by the "lord" of the harvestmen, only a few years ago, while sketching the Abbey.

On the 31st August, the family returned to Wortham, dining with the Hon<sup>ble</sup> F. Hotham rector of Dennington, on their way home. Mr Hotham was a son of Sir Beaumont Hotham, who had been one of the judges at Margaret Catchpole's trial and who had then lately succeeded his

brother, as the second lord Hotham. The Hothams were later connected with the Betts, through the marriage of Charles Montagu Doughty with Frederica Hotham, a daughter of this rector of Dennington.

George Betts' farm accounts for 1815 record the hire of a threshing machine for two days at four shillings. At this time many riots took place, and organized gangs went about Norfolk and Suffolk destroying threshing machines; but no disturbances occurred at Wortham, owing perhaps to the liberal supply of "beer when using the threshing machine, eight shillings."

"Expenses driving the common" are also set down in Mr Betts' accounts. Beasts found, not belonging to the commoners, were on these occasions impounded until a fine had been paid to the lord of the manor.

A regular item in the accounts is a subscription to the National schools. "National schools" received no support from the nation, but were so-called because, soon after 1811, they had been planted all over England by the National Society. This Society, and the British and Foreign School Society founded two years before, together share the honour of having made the earliest organized attempt to educate the people. State help was not forthcoming till 1832, when the Commons voted £20,000 for the erection of school buildings, to be distributed by these two Societies.

## CHAPTER XXXI

1816-1822

THOMAS BETTS' WALKING-TOUR THROUGH WALES—A  
VALENTINE PARTY—THOMAS BETTS, RECTOR OF  
COLNEY, 1821—SIR THOMAS BETTYS PRIEST THERE,  
1455

**I**N July 1816, Thomas Betts went for a walking tour through Wales, with Mr Thomas his former fellow-pupil at Mr Cobbold's, then of Woodbridge. Starting at Hereford to follow the beautiful Wye Valley, the two friends walked completely through Wales, covering in a period of seven weeks, a distance of five hundred and sixty-six miles.

Thomas Betts kept careful record of each day's walk, and has left in his diary vivid pictures of the scenery. He relates romantic stories of ruined castles and abbeys reminiscent of greatness long past ; and adds interesting notes on the rising iron industry, destined to bring future greatness of a totally different description to gallant little Wales. After speaking of the castles of Goodrich, Chepstow, and Caerleon, and the beautiful Crooked Waterfalls and Tintern Abbey, he observed on the canal leading from Merthyr Tydvil to Cardiff, "some barges made of iron, and upon enquiry found that they would bear a greater burthen than those of wood ; but some objection was made on account of the rivets (by which



the plates were fastened), breaking, by which means they frequently became leaky. One of the boats, which I saw, was the first that appeared on that canal, where it had floated nine years."

At Merthyr Tydvil, the friends "went to the principal iron works, belonging to a Mr Crawshay. His brother, very obligingly accompanied us thro' the works, which are of great extent. There had, till within a few days, been some dispute between him and his men, occasioned by the reduction of their wages ; and as he employs upwards of 1500 men, it wore at first an alarming appearance. Mr Crawshay is now making great improvements in the machinery, by erecting a prodigious steam engine of a hundred horse power, the largest in the kingdom. The water wheel (which will, I believe, be taken down) is fifty-two feet in diameter. We saw the whole process of making the bars, which are completed in the fourth heating."

Richard Crawshay the iron master, who, though not the founder, had made these works the greatest in the kingdom, had as romantic a history as that of Dick Whittington. In 1757, a Yorkshire lad of sixteen, he ran away to London, and found work in the iron warehouse of a Mr Bicklewith, and married his master's daughter. Later, he had the luck to win £1500 in a state lottery ; with this sum he started for the Welsh ironfields, and bought the iron works of Merthyr Tydvil. The Mr Crawshay who showed the travellers over the works, was the grandson of the great Richard who had died in 1810.

The pedestrians emerged at Wrexham, where Thomas Betts was much struck by an epitaph to the celebrated

Elihu Yale, Governor of Madras, and benefactor of the great American University which bears his name, who died in 1721 :—

“ Born in America, in Europe bred,  
In Afric travelled, and in Asia wed,  
Where long he lived and thrived—In London dead.  
Much good, some ill he did, so hope all's even,  
And that his soul thro' mercy's gone to heaven,” etc.

The name of Elihu Yale is connected with Suffolk, through the marriage of his daughter with Dudley North of Little Glemham Hall ; his portrait and other mementos of his eventful career remained at Glemham until the death of the late Dowager Lady North.

On reaching Liverpool, the friends were taken across the Mersey in one of the earliest steamboats. “ Within a few months a steam barge across the Mersey has been established,” writes Thomas ; “ to this we were conveyed in a wherry drawn by three horses about nine miles in two hours. The steam barge conveyed us across the Mersey, twelve miles, in one hour and a quarter.”

Thomas Betts, who was much interested in manufactures of all kinds, inspected the silk works at Derby, and was told that the industry “ was very dull, which might be attributed to smugglers and the increase of travelling.” From Derby, with his friends he visited Matlock, Bakewell and Haddon. “ I never enjoyed scenery more, it is, everything considered, the most beautiful I ever saw.”

A month after his return, while he was still in good training, Thomas Betts makes the following entry in his diary : “ Oct. 9th. At the Beef Steak club (in Ipswich).

I betted Mr. Read five guineas that I could walk sixteen miles in four hours, and another five guineas that I could walk twenty miles in five hours. This morning, Dr. Thomson and Mr. Squire attending me, I walked the sixteen miles on the Bury road in three hours and twenty minutes."

Early in the following year, Thomas Betts received an urgent summons to Wortham ; his father had been again " taken very ill in Bressingham Church, while marrying a couple." The attack passed off ; but Mr Betts was not well enough to attend the county meeting held at Stowmarket, " to address the Regent on his escape from the mob on his return from opening Parliament." Thomas and James Betts, now both in Holy Orders, attended the meeting in their father's place.

On November 19th, Thomas' diary tells of a national sorrow : " We went to church, being the day of Princess Charlotte's funeral."

On February 14th, Thomas with his friend the Rev. J. Tweed, who shared his lodgings in Ipswich, " went to Mrs. Cobbold's Valentine party." This pretty, forgotten custom of drawing valentines by lot on Valentine's Day was of very ancient origin, and is mentioned in Pepys' Diary. In Thomas Betts' time, presents were given, each young man being bound, for a few days to be the cavalier of his fair valentine and to wear her favour.

At Wortham, Thomas' father, though frequently suffering from alarming attacks of illness, continued his active public life. His diary speaks of a saving's bank, of which he was the moving spirit, being established at Eye, and he was also on the committee formed " to consider about navigation from Ipswich to Eye and Diss."

“The Bishop of Quebec and Mrs. Mountain came to Wortham” in the autumn of 1819. This now grave and reverend prelate had been the merry careless undergraduate “Mountain,” who accompanied George on the driving tour described by him in his letter to his uncle, and who had drunk wine with their “facetious landlord” at Bedford till half-past two in the morning, being “exceedingly diverted.” Forty-five years had since sobered their boyish spirits, and the added decorum of priestly dignity had chastened their erstwhile love of good wine.

On January 31 1820, two days after the death of King George III., George IV. was proclaimed; the delay was owing, as Thomas Betts notes, to the 30th being “the anniversary of the martyrdom of King Charles.”

A Pitt Club had lately been established at Norwich, which James Betts joined. A dinner ticket of the Club remained at Wortham, sealed with an impression of Mr Pitt’s head in red wax.

George Betts’ diary speaks of assemblies, dinners, and a constant stream of friends dining and sleeping in his ever hospitable Wortham; but George now did not go out himself, he had even of late years given up shooting, deputing it to his sons, though he still records the bag. “Mr. and Mrs. Merest,” he writes on one occasion, “Major Ray, Mr. Martin, dined with us. They shot the Cars with Tom and James, and got fifteen brace.” Another time, “Lord Blandford shot with James and dined and slept here.” Sometimes, when the young people were all out, his neighbour and particular friend would keep him company: “Admiral Wilson dined with me, I was confined with the gout.”

In March 1820, George Betts subscribed to a fund got up



by Major Ray "for the police officers who apprehended the conspirators." This refers to the abortive Cato Street Conspiracy, a second Gunpowder Plot, whose object was to assassinate the whole Ministry, at the house of the Earl of Harrowby in Mansfield Street, while they were at a cabinet dinner.

On June 16 1821, Thomas Betts took the Shannon coach to London. On the 19th, he writes: "King crowned. We went to Westminster at five o'clock, I got a good place for two guineas and a half."

On the 25th, "Thomas was instituted to the rectory of Colney (in Norfolk) given to him by Mr J. Postle," of Colney Hall; but he still kept his curacies, visiting Colney only occasionally to conduct the service, and preach in the parish church. By a curious coincidence, he was not the first incumbent of the parish of Colney to bear his name. Nearly four hundred years before, a certain Sir Thomas Bettys, who was probably a collateral ancestor of his own, had officiated as priest in the same church. A brass to his memory was then still extant, with the following quaint inscription:—

"Owan the Belle ys solemplye rownge  
And the Messe with Devosyon songe  
And the Mete meryly hete,  
Sone shall Sir Thomas Bettys be forgete  
On whose Sowle God have mercy. Amen  
Qui obit 20 die Aprilis An. Dno.  
Mccccliij."

On the 19th of September 1821, the diary of George Betts stops; for the hand which had written it for nearly fifty years could now no longer hold the pen. Thomas



was at Harwich (where he had gone to see Admiral Wilson) when he received the news of his father's illness. On the 25th of September, he describes how he "left Harwich, met the gig at Shotley Gate, on my way to Ipswich receiving a letter from Wortham. My father being very unwell, took a chaise on my arrival at Ipswich to Wortham, where I arrived at half past nine, and found my father very ill." George lingered until April. On the 11th, his son writes: "My father died at half past seven A.M."; and later, "He was buried on the 18th in Wortham Church."

The *Bury Gazette* for April 17, 1822, published the following obituary:—

"On Thursday April 11th, died at Wortham in this county, in his 71st. year, the Rev. George Betts L.L.B. rector of West Winch and Overstrand in the county of Norfolk, prebendary of the Cathedral Church of Lichfield, and nearly forty years one of his Majesty's justices of the peace for the counties of Suffolk and Norfolk. Whether, as a magistrate, a minister, a landlord or a master, his loss will be deeply felt and unfeignedly lamented.

"As a clergyman he was moderate in his demands, in the highest degree assiduous in the discharge of his clerical duties: and an eloquent and impressive preacher.

"As a magistrate he will be long remembered in the hundreds of Diss, Hartismere and Hoxne, where he many years presided, for the unshaken loyalty of his principles, his inflexible regard to justice, the soundness of his judgement, and the impartiality of his decisions; during a period of considerably more than thirty years, he never was known to omit attending either the quarterly or weekly meetings of the magistrates, till within the last eight

months, when advanced age and increasing infirmities confined him entirely to his apartments, and at last put a period to a life, long and actively devoted to the service of his Maker, his King and his country."

By his will, George Betts left his Thorndon estate to his son James ; lands in Diss and Blo'horton to his three daughters to the value of £5000 apiece ; and all his other property, including the Wortham estate, to his eldest son Thomas.

## CHAPTER XXXII

1822-1832

SKITS ON SOCIETY—MARRIAGE OF THOMAS D'EYE BETTS  
AND HARRIET DOUGHTY

**T**HOMAS BETTS' diary is not as full as his father's, and the day's entries are usually only a list of social engagements, such as: "Dined at Woolverstone." "Rode to Norwich County Reform meeting." "Pitt Club at Bury, three hundred and three met, Edgar in the chair, Gooch attending Lord Londonderry's funeral."

A dinner party at Wortham is chronicled: "30th October, The Wilsons, Mr. Clay, Sir Miles and Lady Nightingall, Lady Mary Cornwallis, Mrs Wood, dined with us." A shooting party in January 1823 in the famous coverts at Redgrave is thus set down: "Lord Blandford, Scott, Poley, Surtees, Blake, James, and I shot in the home coverts at Redgrave. We killed 218 pheasants, 26 hares, and 15 rabbits.<sup>1</sup> Admiral Wilson unwell. We dined at Redgrave." Thomas writes also while at Ipswich of dining "with Fonnereau," and "at Orwell Park, and Stoke Park," and staying with "Deans at Hintlesham."

<sup>1</sup> It is believed that the first big bag recorded (for Norfolk) was in 1796, 80 cock pheasants (hens were then seldom shot) in one day at Wretham. Three years before, the total bag for the season at Holkham was 262 pheasants. In 1801, this total had risen to 480. These Holkham figures may have included hens.

In May 1823, he "resigned the living of Colney"; he was now much occupied with work; and the diary constantly mentions clerical duties performed both at Wortham and Bressingham. On 15th April 1824, he "buried Tom Hanton at Wortham aged one hundred years." On the 17th, being Easter day, he took the duty at Bressingham, and "administered the sacrament to Ann Francis aged one hundred and six, who died at night." A few months later he "commenced as curate of Burgate."

In October, "Cobbold read himself in to Wortham, I dined with him at Merests." The Rev. Richard Cobbold, author of "Margaret Catchpole," succeeded Mr Patteson as rector, but though he now read himself in, he did not come to reside at Wortham till after the death of Mr Merest, who continued there as his curate.

Another day, Thomas writes, "dined with Lord Bayning, met Worth, and Croft, and James who slept at Wortham." James had now taken the curacy of Garboldisham. In the summer Thomas gave a farewell dinner to his cousin Capt. Worth, R.N., who was leaving the neighbourhood. "Worth dined and slept here on his way to Brighton, having let Oakley to Mr White, the vicar of Stradbroke."

In October, the family party at Wortham broke up. "My aunt, sisters and James started for Hastings." From subsequent entries in the diary, it is plain that the aunt and sisters knew that Thomas intended to marry before long, and so were settling themselves at Hastings to make room for his future bride; but in June they were all back at Wortham for a long visit. That winter in Hastings, had much amused the country-bred girls. Mary Anne brought back a MS. skit on the society there:



THE REV. THOMAS D'EVE BETTS OF WORTHAM  
1789-1859





a "fragment dropped by an elderly gentleman on the Parade." It describes the arrival of the belle of the ball :—

" See, see amid a halo of perfume  
She comes, she comes and dazzles all the room,  
Surely from yonder wave some sea king's bride,  
To shame our mortal beauties, leaves the tide,  
While frantic Tritons chide their bride's delay,  
And periwinkles chant a plaintive lay.  
Ye envious Tritons, spare for one short hour  
The ocean goddess from her crystal bower ;  
Ye periwinkles, faithful creatures sleep,  
Ye agitated oysters cease to weep,  
For oh ! ye lose her not, too fair is she  
To join unless to mock our revelry.  
Fate in her smile, confusion in her frown,  
A bow gives credit, and a word renown.  
While guilty fiddlers bend beneath her eye,  
And faltering waiters spill the tea and fly."

A man of fashion is next ridiculed :—

" But see advance, in beauty's point and might,  
Him, who must be Love's beacon, here tonight,  
Him, whom Costume, her own dear votary lends,  
Protects, and squeezes, and from dust defends,  
Guards the moustache, corrects with ready eye  
Each straggling curl, and hovers round the tie ;  
Mercy ! oh mercy ! shrieking Venus begs,  
Thy face thou can'st not hide, oh ! hide thy legs ;  
While each stout footman wonders as he goes,  
And views with envious eye, his own diminished hose."

Whilst his " Aunt Nanny " and sisters were at Wortham, Thomas Betts became engaged to Harriet, the second daughter of the Rev. George Clarke Doughty. His diary

is now full of meetings with the Hoxne family, such as : "Went with White, and Doughtys, to see Wingfield Castle and church and Stradbrook, we all dined at Oakley." "Shot with Doughty at Hoxne, White and the Misses Rivett dined at Hoxne."

In October, Frederick Doughty, Thomas' future brother-in-law, took him to shoot the Theberton woods, returning to Hoxne "to dinner with Mr. Doughty and Edgar Montagu." "Dined with Holmes at Gawdy Hall, with Harriet and Charles Doughty" is another entry.

The 30th of January 1826 was fixed for the wedding. Of that day's doings, the bridegroom gives but this scant description : "James and Foster accompanied me in the carriage to Hoxne, where James married me to Harriet Doughty. After the ceremony, Harriet and I went in the carriage to Wortham,—Foster in the rumble."

We may be sure that the wedding procession carefully avoided the Gold Bridge over the Dove at Hoxne, by which, to this day, no bridal party will willingly pass. At this spot, the story runs, King Edmund the Martyr hid himself from the victorious Danes after the battle of Thetford in 870, and was betrayed by a bride, who riding over the bridge, espied the reflection of his golden spurs in the water. Edmund is said to have cursed the bridge, foretelling that it should "never again be crossed by a happy bride." The oak, to which the king is supposed to have been bound as a target for Danish arrows, was still standing in 1848. A stone cross now marks the site.

The newly married couple spent their honeymoon quietly at Wortham; it had not even yet become the fashion to make wedding tours. From an unpublished

diary belonging to another family, it appears that a bride was then expected, for a week or more after her marriage, to put on her wedding dress every afternoon, and wait at home to receive callers. Our bride and bridegroom had three days to themselves, and then the diary records numerous wedding visits paid and returned.

That spring, Thomas Betts "took the oaths to Manning at Diss as magistrate for Norfolk"; he was also made magistrate for Suffolk a few years later.

In the summer, Aunt Nanny and Tom's sisters came to Wortham, and there were gatherings of friends and relations; "Mr. and Mrs. Lucas, Miss Montagus, and Doughty, dined," on one occasion. On another: "Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, Charles and Mary Doughty, Lord and Lady Henniker, and Mr. and Mrs. Glasse, dined here."

On their return, the Misses Betts must have sadly missed their dear old friend Admiral Wilson, who had died in the early spring. The Cornwallis family too had left Brome, the estate having been sold in 1824 to Mr Matthias Kerrison.

In August 1827, a daughter was born to Thomas and Harriet Betts, and christened Mary; "her sponsors were Mrs. Anne Betts, Mr. Doughty, and Miss Doughty." The births of two more children are entered in the old Bible; George, born in December 1829, and Catherine Harriet, born in June 1832.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

1830-1905

BEATING THE BOUNDS AT WORTHAM—CAPTAIN GEORGE  
BETTS IN THE MUTINY—CATHERINE HARRIET, THE  
LAST OF THE BETTS OF WORTHAM

**A**MONG the political tracts found at Wortham are several directed against the radical policy advocated by William Cobbett. In March 1830, that rural agitator was staying in the house of Sir Thomas Beevor at Hargham, whence he visited Eye, and other towns in the neighbourhood of Wortham.

Thomas Betts' farming accounts show that labourers on an average were receiving eight shillings a week, and three pounds twelve shillings with beer for the five weeks of harvest. Wheat, then selling in the market for thirty-eight shillings a coomb, was supplied to the farm men at twenty-four shillings; and they still had the privilege of buying pork and other provisions at a low rate from their masters, thus avoiding the excessive taxes on food at which Cobbett railed.

A curious action concerning the boundaries of the parishes of Wortham and Burgate, fought this year at the Ipswich Trinity Sessions, shows the then importance of the old-time custom of "beating the bounds." This annual perambulation of the rector and parish officials



had come down from pre-Reformation times, when on Rogation days, the priests were accustomed to bless the fields. George Betts, Thomas' father, as his diary shows, had taken part in beating the bounds of his parishes, the last time on May 3rd 1799: "beating the bounds of West Winch."

It appears by a counsel's brief preserved at Wortham, that the action was by way of appeal by the parish against an order made by the Eye magistrates for the removal of two paupers, Thomas Woods and his wife, from the town of Eye to the parish of Wortham, as the place of their settlement.

The case for Wortham states that Woods, aged thirty-eight, had been "born in the parish of Eye, whence he, at the age of thirteen, let himself on Michaelmas day to a certain Mr Hammond of a neighbouring parish for one year, at the wages of forty shillings; that after about two years' service, he returned to Eye, where he continued for three years without letting himself out; that he then enlisted into the 12th Regiment of Foot, and went abroad, returning in February 1818, with a disorder in his eyes which terminated in blindness. The parish of Eye, in which he lived, had relieved him ever since, until his marriage, "when the parish officers fearing it might lead to an increase of the charge on the parochial fund were anxious to settle him elsewhere." They sent him therefore to Wortham, in which parish they asserted he had "gained a settlement," during his two years' service as a boy with Mr Hammond.

Hammond had kept a public-house, called the Dolphin, which was assessed to Burgate, though it stood on the actual boundary-line of the two parishes, Wortham and

Burgate. It contained three bedrooms, in the middle one of which the servant boy Woods had slept. His bedstead had been placed close against the wall, the head of the bed being immediately over a beam in the kitchen, which marked the boundary of the two parishes.

One Simon Frost of Burgate, "who had accompanied the inhabitants of Burgate about twenty years before when they perambulated their boundaries, was called to give evidence. He said that on that occasion, they entered "the Dolphin" at the front door, went straight through the kitchen into the wash-house, and put a stick through the sink-hole at the right-hand corner; that they returned into the kitchen, went out at the back door, and round the wash-house. They then took a circle round some fields, and returned through the Dolphin. No notice was then taken of the beam. In another perambulation, however, a witness stated that the beam had been pointed at.

It was then proved that taking this beam as a boundary line, "only eleven inches of the bed, in the room above, would be in Wortham, so that about four or five inches at the most of the boy's head could have slept in that parish, and the whole of the rest of his person must have slept in Burgate.

Therefore, Counsel maintained, "the pauper had gained a settlement in neither parish as it appeared that he slept in both at the same time."

What the Courts' decision was does not appear.

In 1832 the Rev. G. C. Doughty having lately died, Thomas Betts was given the family living of Martlesham, by his brothers-in-law Charles and Frederic Doughty; and thither the Betts family removed, for rectors now

could no longer remain non-resident. The old home at Wortham was therefore let for a term of years.

In 1831, Thomas Betts' eldest sister Mary Anne, died at Hastings aged forty-nine ; and her death was followed in 1838 by that of her aged aunt Nanny ; and in 1842 by the death of her sister Sophia. The surviving sister Harriet then removed to Ipswich, where she died in 1852.

Some of Sophia Betts' letters are extant, mostly relating to the compulsory purchase in 1841 of some of her land in Diss by the " Diss Railway Extension Company." She collected franks as we now collect stamps ; and four or five bundles of wrappers from her own and her friends' letters are among the Wortham papers. Among the signatures are those of the Prince Regent, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston. She lived long enough to see the abolition of franks, and Rowland Hill's first black postage stamps of 1840. The following lines, which she cut from a newspaper, satirise both the new postage and the new railway speculation :—

" The Railroads we find are falling down fast,  
The pace was too rapid, of course could not last.  
Alas ! our good ancestors little did dream  
Their descendants were doomed to be blown up by steam ;  
Nor thought that the cash they collected with care  
Would be stuck in the railroad to purchase a share.  
I find the stage coaches such evil forbode,  
That they each advertised they will travel by road.  
Sure good Rowland Hill was more friendly than any  
When he schemed that our letters should cost but a penny ;  
This made work for others, it left them a space  
To scheme some new tax to be paid in its place."

Railways rang the knell of many good old country customs, bringing towns and town fashions into remote

villages. "When," said an old farmer of that day—like Adam laying the blame on the woman—"it was *Dame* and *porridge*, 'twas real good times; when 'twas *Mistress* and *broth*, 'twas worse a great deal; but when it came to be *Ma'am* and *soup* 'twas very bad."

The *Ipswich Journal* of 9th December 1837 published the announcement of the marriage of Thomas Betts' only brother, James. "On the 7th, by the Rev. Frederick Borradaile, M.A., Prebendary of Lincoln, the Rev. James Betts, M.A., of Ellingham, Norfolk, to Sophia, youngest daughter of the late Richardson Borradaile, Esq. of Bedford Hill, Surrey." The fashion of honeymoon tours had now come in, so the newly married couple went over to Ireland, visiting Killarney and other beauty spots from Lismore in company with their host Archdeacon Cotton, an old Oxford friend of the bridegroom.

In 1848, James became rector of Great and Little Thornham, but he did not live long to enjoy his preferment. He died the following year leaving no children.

The Betts family now numbered only five persons: Thomas D'Eye Betts, his wife, and their three grown-up children.

George, their only son, had entered the army, and sailed for India soon after, joining the 81st Regiment.

In a letter to his mother, written just before the Mutiny, from Nowshera, where the 81st were then quartered, he gives no hint of the coming trouble. This is the only letter of his which has been preserved; but his official record shows that he served through the Mutiny, and was present as Captain when the 81st Regiment, under Colonel Renny, disarmed, at Meean Meer, one regiment of native cavalry and one regiment of native infantry, all



GEORGE BETTS AS ENSIGN IN THE 81ST REGIMENT  
1829-1883





disaffected and ripe for revolt. There is, however, a letter worth recording which George received at Lahore during the Mutiny, from an officer of another regiment, E. D. Hamilton Vivart :

“ Meerut, *May 26th.*

“ I have been requested by Osborn of my Regiment to write to you a few lines, to say that he was one of the few who, like myself, escaped from Delhi when the Mutiny broke out. He was unfortunately shot through the thigh by a musket ball whilst escaping, and is now in Artillery Hospital in this place (Meerut) doing very well I am happy to say. It appears that his wound was the means of saving his life, as some four or five other poor fellows who got out of the Main Guard at the same time as himself, among them Butler and Angelo of my Regiment, were all murdered by the villagers. He says he accompanied them for about fourteen miles, when his wound became so painful as to oblige him to be left behind in a ditch, the rest promising to return for him if able to procure assistants. He was found the next morning by some villagers, who, after robbing him of all he possessed, at last brought him into Meerut. From them, he learned that the others, after leaving him, shot a Brahmin, and were then set upon by the natives and all killed. It is supposed that Willoughby of the Delhi Magazine was the man who fired the shot, he being the only one of the party who had a gun in his hand.

Osborn says he is very anxious to hear from you, and will write himself when a little stronger. Orders came in this morning from the Chief, desiring half the force from here to march and join him at some place near Delhi,

They are to leave this on the 1st. There has been no down country dāk arrived here for the last four days, but now that the Goorkas have reached Bolandshuhur (sic) it is hoped that communication will soon again be opened."

The Rev. Thomas D'Eye Betts died at Martlesham on the 13th March, 1859. "He was," writes one who well remembers him, "one of the best of magistrates. Firm, plenty of common sense, knew the law and had leanings to mercy; and though he was not an active parson, and his sermons not very attractive, he had a most reverent manner and a good voice. He was very much respected, and his opinions and word went a long way."

The funeral took place at Wortham, where, soon after, the widowed Mrs Betts and her two daughters returned to live.

George Betts still remained with his regiment in India, and in 1861 had the joy of again seeing his eldest sister Mary, who came to India as the bride of Major, afterwards Colonel, Robert Bruce Chichester, C.B. In the December of the following year, Mrs Chichester died at the birth of her only child, the baby Archibald being sent home to his grandmother at Wortham.

On February 23rd 1865, George Betts embarked from Calcutta on board *The Sultana*, with the head quarter wing of his regiment, under the command of Major J. A. Gildea. A month later, "whilst still in the Indian Ocean, they encountered a terrific cyclone which raged for two days, leaving the ship a wreck—yards whirling round the mast with each roll of the ship—many of the braces and all the running gear of the ship broken or loose—ropes without blocks swinging about in the air—the ship

straining and groaning fearfully—the sea very high. It was impossible for the sailors to go aloft to secure the ropes. Nearly all the live stock were killed or drowned. The ship was in the semi-circle of the cyclone. Soldiers as well as sailors behaved with great gallantry.”

With the return of Major George Betts, light-hearted gaiety once more reigned at Wortham, and its hospitable doors were again thrown open to the neighbourhood. In 1873, however, a sad event happened, poor little Archie Chichester, eleven years old, died from the effects of an accident.

Mrs Betts died in 1874.

After the death of their mother, Major George Betts and his sister lived together for some years at Wortham. His health, however, had been seriously impaired in India by a sunstroke, and in June 1883 he died.

Of Catherine the last of her family, little or nothing remains to be told. After her brother's death she lived, for the most part, a solitary life at Wortham, among her old books and the ancient family possessions, every one of which had descended through a long line of Betts.

At her death in December 1905, the good old family who had made their home at Wortham, during four hundred and twenty-five years, became extinct in the male line.

The heir to the landed estate had to be found in Admiral Sir Baldwin Wake Walker, Bart., a descendant of Captain Worth, R.N., whose mother Martha, a daughter of Edmund Betts of Oakley, had married John Worth as long ago as 1772.





John Bettys, son of John Bettys of Wethe

John, probably a priest  
not inherit estate.

George of Wortham, ob. 1599. = Anneys Mans, ob. 1606. Thom:

Rychard of Wortham, b. 1573, ob. 1609. = Susanna, da. of William Smith of Thelnetham; 2nd husband, Richard Smith of Thrandeston. 1583, 1:

John of Wortham, b. 1606, ob. before 1648. = Elizabeth . . . m. 2nd, Nicholas Sucklinge. Daniel, b. 1636, ob. s.p. 1688.

Thomas = Mary . . . Andrew, ob. s.p. Susan, ux. Nicholas Browne. Mary, ux. John Thompson. Mary. Sold Wortham estates to their cousin, George Betts. 715.

Susan, ob. infant. Elizabeth, b. 1678, ob. s.p. 1706. George of Wortham, b. 1679, ob. s.p. 1727. Edmund of Wortham, b. 1681, ob. 1733, m. 1715. = , rector of fChaplain to Panterbury.

Susan, b. 1716, ob. 1785, s.p. = John Soley, rector of Long Stratton. Eliz., b. 1717, ob. s.p. 1777. = Jehosophat Postle, attorney-at-law. = George Betts of Wortham. 3

B | George of Wortham, rector of Overstrand, Prebendary of Lichfield, ob. 1822, aged 71. = 1775, Mary, dau Betts of Oakley aged :

A | George, ob. 1777. Martha, b. 1778, ob. 1791. Eliz., b. 1779, ob. 1798. George, b. 1781, drowned at Dedham, 1795. Mary Anne, b. 1782, ob. 1831. Edmund, b. 1783, ob. s.p. 1805. = infant, 1795, End d. 20 me Liay. George, b. 1799, ob. 1801.

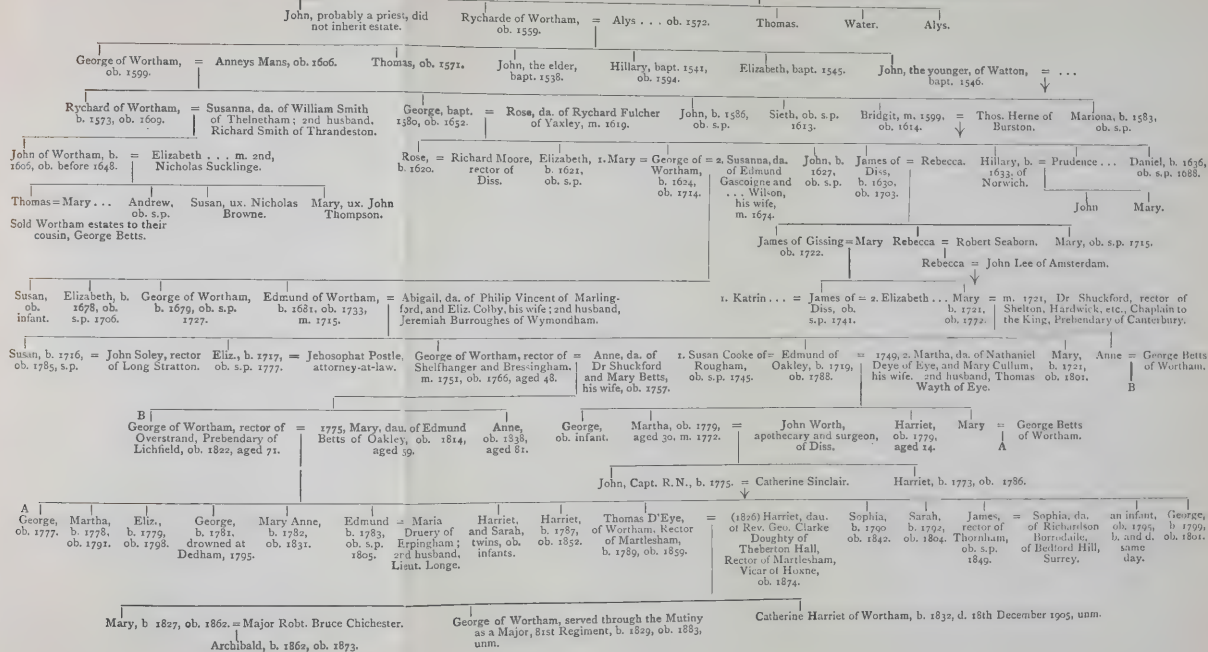
Mary, b. 1827, ob. 1862. = Major Robt. Bruce Chichester.

Archibald, b. 1862, ob. 1873.



# BETTS OF WORTHAM.

John Bettys, son of John Bettys of Wetherden, came to Fenn Street, Wortham, 1480, heir to his father-in-law = Elizabeth, da. of John and Alys Wryght of Wortham.





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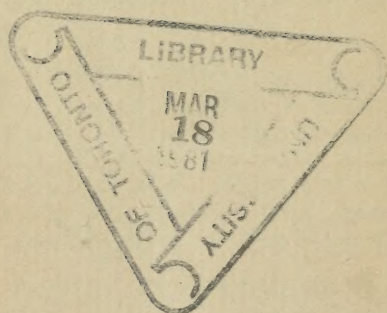
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